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THE CHURCHMAN'S LIFE OF WESLEY.

BY

R. DENNY URLIN,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER, F.S.S.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
	CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	vii
I.	EARLY DAYS AT EPWORTH AND CHARTERHOUSE	1
II.	WESLEY AT OXFORD	9
III.	THE MISSIONER OF THE S.P.G.	27
IV.	CONVERSE WITH MORAVIANS	35
V.	A TRIP TO GERMANY	44
VI.	THE ECLECTIC ANGLICAN	56
VII.	THE PARISH CHOSEN	76
VIII.	A TIME OF PERSECUTION	102
IX.	CHARLES WESLEY	108
X.	OTHER CLERICAL HELPERS	119
XI.	THE LAY PREACHERS	137
XII.	WESLEY IN IRELAND	147
XIII.	METHODISM IN AMERICA	163
XIV.	WESLEY IN SCOTLAND	174
XV.	AUTHOR, COMPILER, AND EDITOR . .	188
XVI.	WESLEY AT THE NEW CHAPEL, CITY ROAD .	207
XVII.	LAST DAYS OF THE FOUNDER . . .	224
XVIII.	THE SECESSION, 1791-1836	231

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PAGE

List of Books and Editions referred to . 256

APPENDICES.

I. The Biographers 257

II. Some Recent Essays 266

III. The Religious Societies 275

IV. The Events of May, 1738 . . . 277

V. Mr. Ingham's Advice 281

VI. The Eucharistical Volume 283

VII. Holy Baptism 298

VIII. King on the Primitive Church . . 303

IX. Wesley on Schism 310

X. The Ministerial Office 315

XI. The Wesley Manuscripts 327

XII. Wesley's Journals 332

XIII. Portraiture and Character 334

XIV. Statistics 347

Index 349

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A.D.

1703. John Wesley born at Epworth, Lincolnshire.
1713. Went to Charterhouse School.
1720. Proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford.
1725. Ordained deacon by Bishop Potter.
1726. Elected fellow of Lincoln, Oxford.
1735. Embarks under S.P.G. for Georgia.
1737. Returns to London, and joins Fetter Lane Society.
1738. (February 7 to May 4). Converse with Bohler.
1739. Methodist movement begun by the Wesleys and Whitefield.
1740. Society organized, and the Moravians forsaken.
1744. First Conference, held at the Foundry.
1747. First journey to Ireland.
1751. Marriage, and resignation of Lincoln fellowship.
1753. At Bath, and in ill health: "New Testament Notes."
1755–56. Crisis with preachers: resolve against secession.
1758. Disputations with Rev. A. M. Toplady.
1763. Secession of Maxfield and Bell.
1772. Receives the freedom of Perth and Arbroath.
1775. American revolt, which Wesley deprecates.
1776. Fletcher's health fails: friendship formed with Coke.
1778. New Chapel (City Road) opened.
1783. Journey to Rotterdam and the Hague.
1784. The Conference legally constituted: ministers sent to America.
1786. Methodist missions to the West Indies, etc.
1788. Death of Charles Wesley.
1790. Last visit to Scotland and the North.
1791. (March 2). Death of Wesley.

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THE CHURCHMAN'S

LIFE OF WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS AT EPWORTH AND CHARTERHOUSE.

THE origin of the family of Wesley or Wellesley[1] has been ascribed to a village in Somersetshire; but it will suffice, coming within the limits of history, to say that Wesleys were found in Dorsetshire in the seventeenth century. Their favourite university was Oxford; and the profession chosen by many of them was the ministry of the English Church. Bartholomew Wesley was one of the Puritan clergy

[1] The following are the variations in the spelling of the name:—Wellesleigh, Wellesley, Westleigh, Westley, Weisley, Weisly, Wesley. The Irish Weisleys lived in Wicklow and Meath; and the most wealthy of them, Garrett Weisley of Dangan, offered to adopt one of the Epworth family. He afterwards, having no child of his own, adopted his young relative Richard Colley, who took the name of Wesley, and became the first Earl of Mornington. His third son, Colonel Arthur Wesley, became first Duke of Wellington. The name was, by this branch of the family, always written as Wellesley after the year 1800.

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who, being ejected from his living in 1662, afterwards, for a livelihood, practised medicine. John, of New Inn Hall, Oxford, the son of Bartholomew, was intimate with Owen, the eminent Nonconformist; and sharing to the full in the troubles which befell his family and many others, he died at an early age. His son Samuel found his way in poverty to Oxford; and there in 1684 he entered Exeter College as a poor scholar or servitor, wholly severing himself from that Puritan school to which his father and grandfather had belonged. After a service of a year as chaplain in the navy, he held the living of Ormsby, Lincoln, for six years, removing to Epworth about the year 1697. While at Ormsby he published a long epic poem, "The Life of Christ," dedicated to Queen Mary. In former years of trouble he had openly resisted the encroachments of James II., and now he may have indulged a vain hope of obtaining the favour of the new dynasty. Soon after obtaining a curacy, Samuel Wesley married Susanna, the daughter of Dr. Annesley, who was also an ejected minister. Both husband and wife were exceptionally well read in the controversies of the time, and were on a higher intellectual level than most of their contemporaries. The fruits of their own ability and conscientious care were very apparent in the lives and characters of their children. It is singular that Puritan traditions should have been discarded alike by the elder Wesley and his wife, and that both of them should have early shown an ardent attachment to

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those principles in Church and State which were known as "High Church." Their sons, Samuel, John, and Charles, followed in the footsteps of parents whom they revered. John Wesley, writing to Lord Stanhope in 1775 on the American question, said, "I am a High Churchman and the son of a High Churchman." But although he resembled his father in many ways, it is reasonable to conclude that in the moulding of his character his mother's hand was more largely concerned. She is known to have been highly cultivated, of strong will, of acute mental faculties, in all respects the pattern of a Christian wife and mother. Of all her children, three sons and three daughters only attained to mature years.

The family home at Epworth in Lincolnshire has often been described. The elder Wesley held the two small livings of Epworth and Wroote, and his task of maintaining and educating a large family was a difficult one. Amongst the incidents which are best known, and need not be here described, were the fire, and the mysterious knockings in the house. The former is always stated to have been the work of an incendiary; and, though it caused serious loss to the vicar, the family were, though with difficulty, rescued. A well-known engraving represents John as a child, at much risk, saved—"a brand from the burning," as he said—through the nursery window; while in front of the vicarage his father kneels to thank Heaven that only house and furniture are suffered to perish in the flames. The

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Epworth ghost story of 1715, which is related in every book on supernatural wonders, has never been fully explained, nor are distinct traces of mischief, trickery, or illusion to be found.[1] Whatever the true solution, the fact is that John Wesley remained throughout life very strongly impressed with a sense of the supernatural, believing that evil spirits are allowed to trouble, as well as good angels to assist, during the earthly career both of the just and unjust.

In due time the three sons successively left a home which was marked by high culture, and by a strictly religious, if somewhat severe, discipline. Little of material help could their parents afford to them; but the lessons of home were never effaced, nor was the intercourse with home suffered to cease. Throughout the Wesley family was found a rare facility in that art of letter-writing which is now becoming extinct; and the correspondence between Mrs. Wesley and her sons appears to have been frequent, and as full of good sense as of vivacity and vigour.

Mrs. Wesley's three sons were in age separated from each other by intervals of several years. Samuel, the eldest, born in 1692, was educated at Westminster School, proceeding thence to Christ Church, Oxford. Being admitted to Holy Orders, he returned to Westminster as an under master.

[1] "The testimony upon which it rests is far too strong to be set aside because of the strangeness of the relation."—Southey, i. 17. The narrative is there given at length.

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When the second mastership became vacant, his reputation for scholarship was such that his promotion was expected; but his friendship with Atterbury and Pope had been sufficient to injure him in the estimation of the authorities. He was afterwards appointed to the mastership of the school at Tiverton, where he died in the year 1739. He was wise, amiable, patient, and solicitous as regards the welfare of his younger brothers; and to them his death at a critical moment of their career, when his advice was more than ever wanted, was a misfortune. Samuel Wesley will be remembered, if for no other reason, as the author of the hymn beginning—

"The morning flowers display their sweets."

The year 1703 is famous in our annals for two events. A great storm—the most violent and destructive storm on record—passed over the south of England, dashing houses to the ground and ships against the shore. Thousands of lives were lost, and the damage was estimated at a sum in those days gigantic. The other event of the year was the birth, on the 17th of June (Old Style), of John Benjamin, to be known in history as John, second son of the Epworth rector. John was nine years younger than Samuel, to whom he looked up as to the relative on whom, after the father's death, devolved to some extent the care of the whole family. When John was about ten and a half years old, he went up to the Charterhouse School, on the nomination of

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the Duke of Buckingham, as one of the foundation scholars. These were limited in number, wore a distinctive dress, and enjoyed some advantages, especially that of exemption from fees and charges. The old schoolroom was a single apartment of large size, and it stood in a large playground, opening by a gate from Charterhouse Square.[1] Little was taught, then or long afterwards, even in the best of English schools, beyond Greek and Latin. If a pupil wished to learn something of history, of the sciences, or of any modern language, he had to acquire such knowledge out of school hours, for it had no recognition in the regular course of study. "John suffered at the Charterhouse under the tyranny which the elder boys were permitted to exercise. This evil at one time existed very generally in English schools."[2] To his spareness of diet at a time when his seniors in school had, and exercised, the right of appropriating part of his daily allowance of food, he afterwards attributed no evil results. On the contrary, he was disposed to think that, by enforced fasting and daily exercise round the square, his constitution had been hardened.

[1] All this is now changed. The educational branch of Charterhouse is removed to Godalming; and the school is seven times as large as formerly. The old site has been sold to the Merchant Taylors' Company.

[2] Southey. "Fagging" prevailed in a harsh form at Charterhouse, as at some other famous schools, up to a recent date. Although mitigated, it survives, and is defended by many, who argue that it teaches subordination, and is therefore useful discipline.

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The severities endured by him as a boy could not have been of a very distressing kind, or he would not have cherished that regard for the old school which led him often to revisit Charterhouse.

The years spent by John at Charterhouse are almost a blank for the biographer. No schoolfellow or early friend seems to have handed down any anecdote which might help to show what kind of boyhood was that of the future organizer of "the united societies." Did he avoid the playground, and devote each hour to study? and if it was not so, how came he in after years to declare that boyish recreations were unnecessary and injurious? There is, indeed, a story that John Wesley preferred, as an elder boy, to dominate his juniors, rather than to take equal rank amongst those of his own age; but this rests on very slight foundation.[1] He was diligent, studious, and well-behaved:[2] and beyond this nothing authentic is known, or probably will ever be known, of Wesley's student days.

The Rev. Samuel Wesley was a man of much erudition, although he failed to gain such a position as relieved him from anxiety. He hoped, like many other learned men of his time, to obtain due recognition, by publishing ambitious works, dedicated to exalted personages. But his Bible History in verse, published in 1704 and dedicated to Queen Anne, and his Latin folio on the Book of Job, brought out in an expensive manner by Riving-

[1] Tyerman, i. 20. [2] *Notes and Queries*, January 31, 1874.

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ton, and containing a fine portrait of its author, did not help to improve his condition. He was, to some extent, identified with the hot-headed Dr. Sacheverell, whom he is known to have assisted. Falling into bad health, he was unable to attend properly to his two Lincolnshire parishes. This weakness (which led to the employment of his son John as his curate) was but the precursor of his death, which occurred at Epworth in April, 1735.

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CHAPTER II.

WESLEY AT OXFORD.

In 1720 John Wesley left Charterhouse, the time having come at which it was usual for the foundation boys of highest repute and longest standing in the school to go up—not empty-handed—to Oxford. For his old schoolroom and playground he always had an affection; and at intervals he would walk round the familiar square, and wonder how it was that its dimensions should appear so shrunken. It does not seem that he formed any close friendships at Charterhouse. On the contrary, it is stated that he failed while there to meet with any congenial friend. Nor was the vacant place in his heart supplied until he had been for several years at Oxford.

At Christ Church his days were spent in study, and uneventfully the years went by. His thoughts were often with the family at Epworth, who had more than their share of troubles. Even at this time of his life, Wesley began to regard the annoyances which beset the path of poverty with

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a philosophic calmness. His purse being scantily supplied, and luxury being out of his reach, he took much interest in abstinence as a medical question—found that it agreed with his hardy frame, and recommended it to others. Extreme simplicity of living and seclusion he found suitable alike to his means and to his habits of thought.

During the undergraduate years, his letters to his relatives, and also his daily pursuits, gave no indication of a special leaning towards the study of theology. Not before the age of twenty-two do his thoughts seem to have been in any way directed towards the Church as a profession; and even then the desire of his father was, at least at first, the most powerful motive.

The immediate ancestors of the Wesleys had all passed from Oxford into the sacred ministry; and there were the two small livings in Lincolnshire, to which the elder Wesley's health would not permit him much longer to do justice. The family at Epworth, in short, were desirous that John Wesley should go into Holy Orders; and he seriously pondered over this important matter, consulting his parents as usual. He felt some difficulty as to the questioned or minatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed; but finally his father's explanation of them he accepted as sufficient. His reading now was shaped by the new choice of a path in life, and (according to his own statement) Divine Providence directed him to the book ascribed to *Thomas à Kempis*. About the same time Bishop

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Jeremy Taylor's devotional works attracted his closest thought. These books had a lasting influence on his mind, preparing the way for the spiritual development of four years later. Now he began for the first time to find religious friends; and the scope and object of his life and thoughts began to change. The development cannot here be closely described; but, with the aid of John Wesley's own words, its outline is sufficiently clear.

In 1725 he received deacon's orders from the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Potter (afterwards primate), whom he regarded as "a great and good man." Half a century later he recalled, with thankfulness, the archbishop's advice to him "not to spend his time in contending for or against things of a disputable nature, but in testifying against vice, and in promoting real, essential holiness." And it is remarkable that Wesley bore this in mind so clearly as to avoid many controversies, sometimes devolving the work on others, and sometimes allowing them to drop. His first sermon was preached at South Leigh; and immediately after this he preached at Epworth a funeral sermon on the death of a young and promising parishioner. In March, 1726, he was elected to a fellowship at Lincoln College—a definite promotion, and one which, if he had valued money, would have made life more easy. Hitherto he had been poor; so much so, that his habit of wearing the hair long, begun in opposition to the prevailing fashion, was boldly set down by himself to a motive of economy—he had nothing to spend on hair-

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dressers. This habit he retained through life, as appears by the numerous portraits.

In November, 1726, he was chosen Greek Lecturer and "moderator of the classes" in his college. This was a compliment of no slight kind to a fellow who had not reached his twenty-third birthday. The duty was, as he afterwards thought, of great service to him; for disputations were held daily, and regular attendance on them gave him "expertness in arguing, and especially in discerning and pointing out fallacies."

Closely now did Wesley apply himself to his pupils; so much so that, as he afterwards said, he should have thought it dishonest not to read with them for the allotted number of hours on every week-day. Nor does it appear that vacations were allowed to interfere with these studies.

Wesley, while at Oxford, entered little into general society; and the only glimpse of his social life is the statement that once a month he received in his own rooms the other fellows of Lincoln.

In 1727 there was a change of a deep and permanent kind, showing that this date is really the momentous one in Wesley's spiritual history. He now studied the two famous treatises of the Rev. William Law—the "Serious Call" and "Christian Perfection." The result of this study was of the highest moment in his development. Hitherto he had been rather a teacher of morality, placing much dependence upon forms and observances. After reading these two books, he said, "I was convinced

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more than ever of the impossibility of being half a Christian, and determined to be all devoted to God, and give Him all my soul, my body, and my substance." He now began not merely to read, but to study the Bible; and he saw in a clearer and clearer light the indispensable necessity of having the mind that was in Christ. Religion then for the first time appeared as "the inward and outward conformity to the Master." From that day forth he became a faithful follower of the great Example, and accepted of Him.[1] He doubtless received a great accession of spiritual strength and light nine years later; but so far as conversion can be said to follow upon the teachings of another, and so far as it can be exemplified by a change of all that constitutes, and grows out of, the inner life, Wesley's conversion to righteousness must be ascribed to the year 1727, when the religious treatises of Law produced on him an effect which it would be hard to express in language.

"He now insisted on a high standard of religious consecration and personal holiness, both active and passive. He presently united with these views not a little of the High Church doctrine and discipline."[2] These two books convinced him, he said, of the "exceeding height and breadth and depth of the love of God;" and the "light flowed in so mightily upon his soul, that everything appeared in a new view." This was therefore the true date of his conversion.

[1] Tyer. i. 50, 72; Southey, chap. ii. [2] Rigg, 22.

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In the February of the same year, Wesley took the degree of M.A., delivering (according to usage) Latin lectures or exercises, of which there is no record. In July following he received priest's orders from Archbishop Potter, while serving the curacy of Wroote. This he undertook for the sake of helping his father, who had fallen into bad health. The same filial devotion might have kept him for many years between Wroote and Epworth, but for the fact that he had established a reputation at Oxford, and could not now be spared from his college.

Dr. Morley, then Rector of Lincoln, wrote to Wesley, strongly urging his return to the duties of his fellowship and lectureship; and towards the end of 1729 Wesley left the Lincolnshire curacy, and returned to residence at Oxford, where he remained steadily for six years.

Faithful and learned men were just then specially required in their colleges; for there was an irreligious spirit abroad. The university authorities were much alarmed at the spread of new and pernicious notions amongst the undergraduates; and measures had already been taken to expel three of the students, who had gone out of their way to make a profession of deism. The state of England was at that time alarming, and even in the Church there was a terrible falling away. There is proof that the candidates for orders were often ignorant of the Scriptures, and even of the catechism of the Church.

On returning to Oxford, Wesley was placed in charge of eleven pupils, to whom he devoted himself

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with characteristic care and punctuality. There was, however, a new demand upon all the hours which he could spare from the regular round of duty.

For some months a little Society of Churchmen at Oxford had been attracting some notice, and not a little ridicule. It was sometimes called the "Godly Club," and sometimes the "Sacramentarian," and it contained a number of university men, chiefly of undergraduate standing. It seems strange, but is unquestionably true, that to belong to such a society in those days was to incur some odium. George Whitefield, who had lately entered Pembroke as a servitor, was junior to the Wesleys; and when, on a certain Sunday, he saw some of these devout students forcing their way "through a ridiculing crowd," to receive the Holy Eucharist at St. Mary's, he boldly joined with them. Whitefield has left an account of the Sacramentarian, or Holy, or Godly Club, which clearly shows it to have been one of many of the same character then existing in England, although it probably was the only society of the kind then flourishing at Oxford. Charles Wesley was its most prominent member until John's return from the Lincolnshire parish. That the elder brother, immediately after settling down again at Oxford, should have been chosen as its leader is a proof that his reputation was already high amongst the best of his contemporaries. He was even then a man of mark, although there were many who regarded him as a "queer enthusiast." To one of the latter the bishop's chaplain foretold that the

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"curator of the Godly Club" would become "a standard-bearer of the Cross." The society in question was so far from showing mere youthful enthusiasm, that its members from time to time wrote for counsel to an aged clergyman, whose name did not appear, but who has been identified as the father of the Wesleys. The members of the society had rules by which all were bound, and they together resorted to the Holy Communion every Sunday, but their paths of self-imposed duty during the week diverged. Some visited the homes of the poor, while some frequented the workhouse and taught its inmates. The schools and the gaol received due and systematic attention from other members of the club; nor could any ridicule divert them from their great object of doing good to the souls and bodies of their poorer brethren around. They numbered from twenty to thirty, and were influenced by the resolute character of their leader, who was, even as a young man, calmly defiant of scorn and opposition.

Other traits marked him as a strong individuality at Oxford. He carried out a severe economy, as regarded both time and money. As his income increased he still limited his personal expenditure to the lowest possible sum, and he devoted the growing surplus to charitable objects. Thirty pounds a year was all that he spent, and resolved to spend, on himself. Finding that five hours of sleep out of the twenty-four sufficed for him, he established a rule of rising at 4 a.m., to which he always adhered.

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All this earnestness and self-denial was of so strange and exceptional kind, that it attracted much remark.

Of the many nicknames, there was but one which adhered to the Oxford society for any long time. The term "Methodist" was sufficiently new and distinctive, and so far was it from being offensive that it was adopted by those to whom it was applied.[1] The Oxford Methodists prided themselves on their strict adherence to all the rules and rubrics of the Church; and it is not surprising to find that the bishop expressed himself as quite content with their proceedings.

John Wesley's special talents first showed themselves in the guidance of this society. In his curacy his success was not so apparent, while on his return to Oxford he was at once recognized as a fit leader of other minds. Here was first shown forth that power of ruling which marked him as one fitted to guide and control large numbers of his fellow-Christians, and which received in later years as large a field for exercise as often falls to the lot of prelate or of statesman.

In other respects the six years spent in Lincoln College were not eventful. There was, indeed, a long correspondence with Mrs. Pendarves (afterwards Delany), a lady of fashion, whose elaborate letters show culture not unmixed with affectation. This appears to have been no more than a sentimental friendship on either side, in the course of

[1] Mention was made in a tract printed in 1693 of some "New Methodists" who had set forth an old doctrine in a new light.

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which little additional light is thrown on the character and doings of the ascetic fellow of Lincoln. In 1732 he wrote, for the use of his pupils, his sermon on the Eucharist, a topic on which his thoughts were much bent. Wesley's republication of the sermon of 1732, fifty years later, confirms the opinion that in no essential matter had his theology altered in the interval. About the same time, in answer to an admirably expressed letter from his mother, he gave the clearest definition which perhaps was ever given by him of his view of that doctrine. He disavowed alike transubstantiation and consubstantiation, while speaking of an union of the Divinity with the believer in that sacrament, the *manner* of the union being a mystery. This is probably a fair statement of the view held by the Oxford sacramentarians.

It was during this period that Wesley became known to the eminent nonjuror William Law, then living in a tranquil seclusion near to London. At this time there was an identity of religious opinion between them, and the elder divine was "as an oracle" to his younger disciple. That their relations afterwards changed is owing to the fact that, as years rolled on, Law fell under the influence of mystical writers like Behmen. At the point where practical religion was abandoned for wild and fanciful speculation, Wesley took his stand, declining to follow even one to whom he was so deeply indebted, and for whose early writings he had through life high admiration. The pupil did

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not in after years sit at the feet of his master, but the obligations to Law were never forgotten. "His philosophy and theology were permanently elevated and enriched through the familiarity which he had gained with some at least of the writers to whom Law had introduced him, as well as through the direct influence of Law himself." [1]

While still sitting at the feet of William Law, Wesley wrote the two sermons which contained his doctrine of Christian perfection.[2] One of them, entitled "The Circumcision of the Heart," was perhaps the sermon to which he most often referred in after life. As though to answer in anticipation those who should impute to him a changing theology, Wesley wrote in 1765: "This sermon contained all that I now teach concerning salvation from all sin, and loving God with an undivided heart." In 1733 Wesley's name first appeared in print as that of an author, his earliest work being a collection of prayers.

Immediately after this it was, for family reasons, thought expedient that efforts should be made to obtain the Epworth living for John; but the latter doubted if the plan could be carried out, and, on the whole, he preferred his quiet and useful mode of life at Oxford. His reasons he explained at length in a letter written in

[1] Rigg, 27.

[2] "It is a gross mistake to imagine that the doctrine of Divine Influence, with its cognate truths, was not discovered and embraced by Wesley until his meeting with Böhler in 1738."—Tyer. i. 88.

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December, 1734, to his father. He valued retirement, time for study, freedom from care, and those very frequent opportunities for worship which Oxford ever afforded. But his letter, far from showing an indisposition for work, goes on to explain that under the shadow of the college walls were fields "white unto harvest," abundant room for charity—schools, prisons, and workhouses, "where both old and young gladly received the word of exhortation." He also referred to "the schools of the prophets" at Oxford, where there was an opening, much wider than in any parish, for him who would become, not merely a drop of heavenly dew, but a fertilizing river. Such, he said in conclusion, were part of his reasons for choosing to abide as yet in the station where he was, and not seeking a different sphere in the Lincolnshire parish.

Samuel Wesley tried to convince his brother that as a clergyman he was under some degree of obligation to accept the cure of souls, and reminded him of his oath on receiving orders. John felt some misgivings on this point, and submitted it to the bishop, whose reply was remarkable. "It doth not seem to me," answered the bishop, "that at your ordination you engaged yourself to undertake the cure of any parish, provided you can as a clergyman better serve God and His Church in your present or some other station." These words had a wider application than their writer intended; for they came to the mind of the self-appointed mis-

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sionary to all England when, five years later, he finally renounced all idea of respecting parochial limits or working in any one locality.

But while John Wesley was hesitating—drawn in one direction by a wish to gratify and help the Epworth family, and in another by his own predilections—the elder Wesley died, and the chance of succeeding to the vicarage passed away. The next two years of his life were to be passed as a missionary under the S.P.G. Before, however, following him across the Atlantic, it may be convenient to glance at his later visits to Oxford. Revisiting the old haunts at intervals of three or four years, he seems to have continued on friendly terms with the authorities of his college, who treated him with much indulgence, until the resignation of his fellowship. This did not occur until his ill-considered marriage in 1751 rendered that step, according to college statutes, unavoidable.

In the mean time Wesley was under an obligation to preach (or to find a substitute) in his turn, which came once in three years, before the university of St. Mary's. In 1738, after his return from the banks of the Rhine, he spent a fortnight at Oxford. Just at this time his mind was much exercised on the doctrine of justification. An interview with Charles Delamotte, who had been one of his companions in the voyage to Georgia, did not tend to quiet, nor did the expedient of opening at hazard on Scripture texts—learned from the Moravians More assuring was the quiet study, in the libraries,

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of such works as set forth the doctrine of his own Church on justification. Much that he found in the Homilies he "extracted, and afterwards printed for the use of others." Rightly or wrongly, Wesley was convinced by this investigation that his views were in accordance with the writings of St. Paul, and with the standards of the English Church. His severer studies in theology may be said to have concluded at the libraries of Oxford at the close of the year 1738.

In 1741 he again spent several days in the old city, finding to his regret that the original society of "Methodists" had dwindled almost to nothing. Gambold, one of its early members, he however discovered, and the meeting must have been a pleasant one to both of them. Again he looked through old folios at his college library and the Bodleian. Calvin's own account of his dealings with Servetus now attracted his scornful notice. In truth, Wesley rarely spoke of either the foreign or the Scottish reformers with much respect.

On the 25th of July, 1741, Wesley again stood in that pulpit at St. Mary's from which John Wycliffe had preached three centuries earlier. His text was, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and the discourse was afterwards published as a tract. His Journal gives but a laconic note of these university sermons. The harvest was plenteous, he now remarked; but of the way in which an unusual crowd received his message, nothing is recorded. Three years later, when his

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name was more widely known, and his irregular services and mission chapels were much discussed, he once more preached at St. Mary's, the congregation being again very large. The sermon was not a smooth, elegantly turned essay of the kind then most admired. It was a severe and plain-spoken warning to triflers, and to such—of whatever rank—as neglected their duties and obligations. Dr. Kennicott, who heard and described this sermon, tells us that the Vice-Chancellor, offended by the severity of the preacher's censure, sent to ask for the sermon, but wisely took no further step. The Dean of Christ Church, being asked for his opinion, expressed it thus cautiously: "John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, although an enthusiast."

In January, 1751, Wesley received a pressing letter from Dr. Isham, Rector of Lincoln, whom he described as "a generous and friendly man," asking him to go and vote at an impending election. He went, and made some notes of more than ordinary interest. The demeanour of the people at Oxford had much improved since 1744, for now all was civility and attention, and the Methodistic leader was no longer pointed at in the streets. He even felt in doubt as to the right explanation of all this, as he asked whether the scandal of the Cross had ceased.[1]

Wesley had long before committed himself to the opinion that there ought to be no marriage in

[1] Journal, ii. 213.

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the ranks of the priesthood; and on this point he remained firm in theory. Yet deeming that there might be exceptional cases, and that his own was one of them, he consulted Mr. Perronet, one of the very few persons ever consulted by him. The answer was such as he hoped for—although, if it had been otherwise, the marriage was too far arranged to have been broken off. Shortly afterwards, he addressed to the rector and fellows of his college a letter resigning his fellowship.

In later years John Wesley sometimes revisited Oxford in the course of his preaching tours.

In 1769, while on his way to Oxford, he for the first time visited Wallingford, where he noted that the fields were white unto harvest, all the people, rich and poor, flocking to hear him in the evening. "Abundance of blossoms" he saw, but he had misgivings as to the future of many of them. Like all other revivals, this one had its splendid displays of blossom; yet the season of fruit brought much disappointment to over-sanguine husbandmen. Wesley by this time was less hopeful as to results; but this did not affect his capacity or his zeal for work.

On reaching Oxford he found no place in which to preach. He had an invincible dislike to Dissenting chapels, and here the chapel was safely locked against one whom they perhaps regarded as "a Ritualist." At last, the sermon was given in the garden of one James Mears; and no such congregation had he spoken to in Oxford since the

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memorable day at St. Mary's, exactly a quarter of a century earlier. Two days later, he spent an hour quite agreeably with some serious students before leaving for Northampton. At this town many people were that night "frightened into good resolutions" by an aurora of stupendous brilliancy.[1]

In July, 1783, there had been a fearful storm, and the lightning and thunder such that the country people in Oxfordshire thought that the day of judgment had come. This terror brought with it a "spirit of seriousness," which was favourable to the reception of the preacher's message. In Oxford itself his new preaching-house was "filled with rich and poor, scholars as well as townsmen." He compared the halls and gardens around with those which he had lately seen in Holland, much to the advantage of the former.

Another visit to Oxford, and perhaps the last, was paid in 1784, when his congregation was also large, and "both students as well as townsmen were deeply serious," as he addressed them.

Even Oxford has witnessed many changes under the shadow of her antique towers and spires; and while many of the old rules framed to ensure conformity are swept away, students may now call themselves Methodists without incurring remark, much less ridicule. But whatever changes, now or in the future, may be wrought, it will never be forgotten that in his rooms at Lincoln John Wesley first exhibited those powers of controlling others

[1] Journal, iii. 362.

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which have given him a place amongst the greatest leaders of mankind. Nor is the historic city of learning likely to forget that in her midst, exactly a century and a half ago, was found the cradle of Methodism.

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CHAPTER III.

THE MISSIONER OF THE S.P.G.

No portion of Wesley's career has been so fully narrated as his Georgian expedition, his Journals, on some topics scanty, here entering minutely into detail. The circumstances which led to his becoming "a missioner" are briefly told. Soon after the death of the elder Wesley, Dr. Burton (of Corpus Christi), who had long taken a deep interest in the new colony of Georgia, asked both John and Charles Wesley to proceed thither. He had noted them at Oxford as specially adapted for mission work. The consent of their mother, lately widowed, was nobly and promptly given. John Wesley's chief advisers, his brother Samuel and William Law, were also consulted. General Oglethorpe, whose most enduring monument is a famous couplet by Alexander Pope, was the leader of the expedition. Charles Wesley acted as the general's secretary; while John went out under the auspices of the Propagation of the Gospel Society.

The thoughts of many of the best men of that

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age were bent in the same direction. The admirable Berkeley (afterwards Bishop of Cloyne) had made great exertions to bring into operation a scheme "for the reformation of manners among the English in our Western plantations, and the propagation of the Gospel among the American savages." And when Berkeley was nominated to a valuable deanery, he rejoiced that it would enable him to carry out his "scheme of Bermuda."[1] In joining this mission under Oglethorpe, John Wesley thought less of the colonists than of the Indian tribes amongst whom he expected to labour. They were known to be numerous in Georgia, and the new colony afforded a way of reaching them.

But his idea of work amongst the Indians was never realized, and his short mission was to be only amongst the settlers at Savannah, the chief town of the promising colony. The nucleus of an industrious community had already been found in a band of persecuted Lutherans from Salzburg; and many other German families now resolved to find a home in Georgia. On the 14th October, 1735, the Wesleys embarked at Gravesend, amongst their fellow-voyagers being Benjamin Ingham, an old Oxford friend and contemporary, and Charles Delamotte, a younger follower of much energy, and blessed with a "loving and simple" spirit. About thirty German emigrants, headed by their bishop, Nitschman, and accompanied by their wives and families, were also on board. They were Moravians;

[1] Seventh Report on Historical Manuscripts.

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and of their Christian demeanour and simplicity of mind and life, approving notice was taken both by Wesley and by Ingham. During the voyage rough weather was met with; and once a squall split the mainsail, and the ship was all but overwhelmed. The English passengers on board screamed with terror, while the Germans were quite calm—not afraid to die, they said. This contrast made a deep impression on Wesley. He had applied himself, with characteristic energy, to the study of German, in order that he might understand the emigrants; and being much interested in them, he learned as much as possible of their religious system, and of the personal history of their leaders. His ardent wish to see Herrnhut, the religious centre of these brethren, was not gratified until nearly three years later.

The virtues of the Moravians were evident—discipline and obedience, courage and fidelity, earnestness and the "single eye." Wesley was justified in drawing conclusions most favourable to those whom he now met; but he erred in hastily supposing that Moravian teachings were in other places certain of producing similar results; nor was he undeceived, until closer observation of the Moravians, in England four years later, led him to form a very different opinion. Now he declared that his heart's desire had been given: he had found people whose conversation was in heaven—quite unlike the so-called Christians of England.

The voyage, though tedious and stormy, was

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relieved by diligent studies, and by the acquisition of new ideas; and the whole party landed at Savannah in February, 1736.

One of the first persons met with was Spangenberg, a prominent Moravian, who asked several questions as to his religious state, in language to which the Oxford fellow was not accustomed. This led to further inquiries into the Moravian peculiarities. The fruits were good, so Wesley argued; and the tree must therefore be a perfect one. Why were not devotion and piety of this kind found amongst his own people?

Of the mission in Georgia it needs to say little. The Wesleys were unworldly and precise, destitute of tact, firm even to obstinacy, and at that time unfit for rough work on uncultivated soil. They accomplished little; and rapidly becoming unpopular in the colony, they had no inducement to remain in it. The place was evidently unfavourable for carrying out their ideas of rubrical exactness. Yet they insisted on immersion in baptism; they required sponsors to be communicants; and they refused the Holy Communion to such as had received irregular or lay baptism, and to such as omitted to send in a previous notice. But they not only offended by strict adherence to the letter of the rubrics, or by a degree of rigour which the law ecclesiastical has never authorized. The dividing of the usual morning service into separate portions, though well intended, only gave fresh offence. Evidently Savannah was not the place for either carrying out

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with great strictness the system of the Church, or for endeavouring to improve on it. Charles Wesley, who, in nerve and endurance, was not equal to his brother, speedily gave up the contest, and returned to England. John remained in Georgia for another year, during which he resumed his theological studies; and while on a trip with Delamotte to Frederica, they went carefully over Bishop Beveridge's work on the Councils. Amidst all discouragements, it was pleasant to Wesley to find that many in England were grateful for his past counsels, and prayed for his return. Amongst other letters which reached him was one from Whitefield, who said, "May you go on and prosper, and in the strength of God make the devil's kingdom shake about his ears."

Before his return to England occurred the strange dispute which has received an undue share of notice in the biographies. Mr. Causton, a man of vindictive temper, a magistrate and leading citizen of Savannah, conceived a dislike to Wesley. This may have arisen from the fact that Causton's niece, Miss Sophy Hopkey, had, for reasons unexplained, hastily broken off a kind of engagement which she had formed with the missionary, and had married a Mr. Williamson. Shortly after this marriage, Wesley, who had not recovered from his sharp and bitter disappointment, carrying out as before his strict rubrical rule, repelled from the Holy Table this Mrs. Williamson, by so injudicious a step giving rise to rumours as to his real motives. Mr. Causton now became the

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aggressor. He brought together all the complaints which had been uttered amongst the colonists, into one long indictment of twelve counts; and on this he formally prosecuted Wesley in the local court, a "true bill" being found thereon by the grand jury. Eleven out of the twelve accusations were solely connected with Church law and usage. Wesley as to these most properly demurred to the jurisdiction of the court; and on the solitary charge of which a secular tribunal could take notice, he "joined issue," and demanded a speedy trial. Mr. Causton now temporized, neither withdrawing nor proceeding with the charges; and the necessary conclusion is that the whole affair was spitefully arranged, with no other object than to annoy the missioner, and to drive him from the colony.

In November, 1737, his position being in a high degree disagreeable as regarded the colonists, and there being no heathens within his reach, Wesley resolved to return to England. His journey to Charleston, with his faithful friend Delamotte, was one of danger; but ultimately they secured a passage in a homeward-bound ship. Even while at sea an indolent season was impossible with Wesley. To those on board he gave regular instruction; and he now completed (for the press) an account of M. de Renty, whom he regarded as the pattern saint of modern times. But although he strove thus to "redeem the time," Wesley could not drive away unpleasant thoughts, or save himself from falling into a state of mental depression, which certainly has no parallel in his life-history.

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On the voyage there was a frightful storm, when Wesley, probably for the only time, was oppressed by the fear of death. A judicious friend would have seen in this merely another proof of the low state into which the frustrated hopes and aims of two years had brought him. In truth, he was at that time, and for many weeks later, in a state of despondency almost morbid. That the Moravians on the outward voyage were calm and fearless, seemed the clearest proof that they were perfect Christians; that he himself in a tempest at sea was in terror of death, now appeared to him a proof that he did not possess true Christian faith. At this painful time of introspection and self-accusation, he wrote down some bitter things of himself in his Journal, which have been frequently, and not always fairly, quoted.

A less candid man, while revising his Journal for the press, years later, when the cloud had long passed away, would have omitted these passages. Wesley, however, now transcribed them, merely adding brief notes for the purpose of showing that the passages, written under illusion and excited feeling, did not truly represent his state.[1] Amongst these passages was an oft-quoted and misleading one, to the effect that, having gone to America to

[1] Examples are these: In the original entry he wrote that he was "alienated from the life of God, and a child of wrath." When revising this afterwards, he appended the important words, "I believe not." To the passage accusing himself of want of faith, he added a note: "I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son."—Journal, i. 72.

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convert the Indians, he was never himself converted. In after life his impression was far otherwise: although it may be true that on his return from America he was still wanting in that spiritual power which marks "a Christian in the highest sense of the word." [1] But although at the close of the year 1737, and for ten years previously, he thought and spoke of himself only as an "unprofitable servant," there is all reason to believe that the Master, whom he very closely followed, accepted and owned him, and rewarded his service.

In this state of depression John Wesley landed at Deal, having been away from England for more than two years. His future was all obscure, as he had just now no definite aim or employment. His duties as a curate-in-charge and as a college tutor, and later still as a missionary, had all come to an end, never to be resumed.

It only remains, before opening a new chapter of his life, to say that his voyage to America, while full of instruction and warning to his own mind, was not wholly destitute of results to those amongst whom he laboured. At the time, indeed, all seemed to be vexation and disappointment, and there was no gleam of sunshine visible. But there was, later on, some evidence to prove that the earnest, though not always judicious, labours of the missioner in Georgia had not been in vain.

[1] Rigg, 32; Journal, i. 77.

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CHAPTER IV.

CONVERSE WITH MORAVIANS.

THE emigrants, whose Christian fortitude had impressed John Wesley on the voyage, were members of the *Unitas fratrum*, or Moravian Church, the exact history and claims of which have been much debated and are still obscure. The Moravians with whom he was for a time associated after his return to London, were not strictly entitled to that name, though they accepted Moravian teachings, holding close intercourse with Moravian leaders like Zinzendorf and Spangenberg. But in one way or the other—in America and in Europe—the Moravian system was closely brought before Wesley's mind; and some portions of it influenced his action when founding and directing the Methodist societies. It is curious to contrast his notes of Moravianism made in 1735–37, with those made some four years later, when he had gained a deeper insight into their system and its tendencies. It is probable that his first knowledge of the Moravians while on his outward voyage led him to the study of their favourite

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writers. Amongst those recommended to him by Nitschman, the leader of the band of emigrants, would be the "Lutheran and Calvinistic writers" mentioned in the Journal as pervaded by "an overgrown fear of popery"—a tendency to magnify the doctrine of faith, and to minimize or obscure all other Christian doctrine. From a perplexity resulting from the study of the "well-meaning, wrong-headed Germans," Wesley was relieved while in America by the careful study of such standard English writers as Beveridge and Nelson. But even then he was at a loss to find a safe rule for the interpretation of Scripture; for the English writers did not altogether agree among themselves as to the interpretation of Scripture. It was not long, he added, before Providence led him to those who showed him a sure rule, the famous maxim of Vincentius.[1] If he had been content with so safe a resting-place, all might have been well. But his mind was unquiet, and at that time apt to rush into extremes. The pendulum was now swung the other way; and he fell into an error of another kind when he thought too highly of the usages of antiquity, and "extended it too far"—in other words, he drank of the stream too far down from its source. It must have been now that the excess of rubrical and ritual exactness was shown in Georgia; for instance, the refusal to

[1] "Consensus Veterum: quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod semper creditum." It is curious that Tyerman and Rigg, in recounting these passages, omit Wesley's own statement that PROVIDENCE led him in the direction of this maxim:

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recognize lay or irregular baptism. These "entanglements," as Wesley termed them, came to an end speedily; but how, and at what date, cannot exactly be stated. More than one recent writer, with more boldness than discretion, has attempted to trace out minutely this part of his development; yet Wesley himself wrote that he could not give "a distinct account of his return towards the right way."

When he reached London and rejoined his brother Charles, the entanglements caused by discursive reading while in a state of mental unrest, were nearly at an end, for (with two slight exceptions) there are no later traces of perplexing studies in theology. His first misreading of rules and rubrics had been corrected by wider knowledge and by deeper thought. So far as his theology was concerned, the edifice was now complete—only warmth and illumination were wanting. It was ordained that the clouds should be cleared away, and the new impulse conferred, in the May of 1738; and this through the instrumentality of an obscure German. Two things are clear—that Peter Bohler, the young Moravian immigrant, was at this juncture of essential service to John and Charles Wesley in their spiritual development; and that his views of doctrine were such that it was not in the character of a mere *instructor* that he was capable of rendering them any service. His intercourse with them was of short duration, compressed into a few weeks; and although for the time he gained their assent to his view, and that of other Moravians, of "justification

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by faith," they speedily returned to the more sober estimate formed by the standard English writers. Living faith is always, said Bohler, given in a moment; and its recipient is conscious of a great and vital change, without which consciousness he is no true Christian.[1]

If Bohler had described this as a gift possible indeed, and sometimes for special objects and on favoured persons bestowed, as on St. Paul and Cornelius, none would have dared to gainsay him. But going far beyond this, he declared that to be a fixed and invariable rule which more experienced Christians knew to be the rare exception. Thus presented to him, the doctrine appeared to Wesley as being different from all that he had learned at Oxford—"he regarded it as a new gospel."[2]

Again he consulted William Law, and he made exertions to bring this eminent man and Bohler together. The interview took place; but Law was ill satisfied with the explanations given by the German, and he remarked on the inaccuracy of his memory. A petulant letter was now sent to Law by Wesley,[3] reproaching him with not having unfolded a vital portion of the Gospel. The reply showed much dignity and forbearance, and it contained some noteworthy passages. "I have been governed," wrote Law, "through all I have written and done, by these two fundamental, unchangeable maxims of our Lord—'Without Me ye can do nothing;' 'If any man will come after Me, or be My

[1] Journal, i. 104. [2] Tyer. i. 177. [3] Moore, i. 364.

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disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.' If you are for separating the doctrine of the Cross from faith in Christ, or following Him, you have numbers and names on your side, but not me."

Then followed some words which Wesley, while under the glamour of Moravian teaching, little regarded at the time, but which came back to his mind with powerful effect in after life. "Let me advise you not to be too hasty in believing that, because you have changed your language or expressions, you have changed your faith. The head can as easily amuse itself with a living and justifying faith . . . as with any other notion: and the heart, which you suppose to be a place of security, . . . is more deceitful than the head." Such warnings had no effect on Wesley at the time, while on Bohler they were thrown away. The latter firmly believed that all Christianity was summed up in a right doctrine of justification, which, long hidden in the Bible, had now been brought to light by his German friends. When met by arguments, his only reply was, "Your philosophy must be purged away."

But however crude and misleading as a theologian, Bohler had the power of touching other hearts as with an electric spark. He was at that time hardly more qualified to instruct others than was the "little maid" of Syria;[1] yet the "word in season" may be given by a messenger endowed only with a simple, earnest faith. Justin Martyr, as Wesley knew, one

[1] Law thought little of his mental powers, though describing him as an "extraordinary good young man."

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day wandering perplexed on the sea-shore, met with an unknown stranger, who told him to pray that the gates of light might be opened to him, and then disappeared, and was seen no more; but that one conversation led to the kindling in Justin's heart of a fire which never was put out. Wesley, while sorrowful and very heavy under a cloud of vexations, and almost in despair, was also stirred to seek and to find new light and strength. His own record of these days of May, 1738, is precise. On the 24th, rising early as usual, his eye fell on the mention by St. Peter of "great and precious promises." In the afternoon he attended service at St. Paul's, when the anthem was, "Out of the deep have I called." In the evening he went to one of the devotional meetings then common amongst earnest Churchmen. St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was the subject of their study; and while thus occupied a divine peace came over his troubled spirit.[1] It was not the absolute calm of which the Moravians had talked, for immediately afterwards he was "in heaviness because of manifold temptations;" and when, by Bohler's advice, he took every occasion of preaching to others, there was still "a kind of soreness at the heart." But such opportunities of preaching became daily fewer. His manner was unconventional, and he uttered burning words which the London clergy hardly liked to encourage. Receiving many hints that the invitations to preach would not be repeated, and anxious for the support

[1] See Appendix IV., "Events of May, 1738."

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of other minds, and for the story of other conflicts and conquests, he resolved to visit that Herrnhut of which he had three years before heard so much. There he would find, so he was assured, "living witnesses of the full power of faith."

Before leaving England, Wesley visited his mother at Salisbury. He preached on the way at Stanton-Harcourt, and he remained a few days at Oxford, where he preached a university sermon (11th June, 1738). Here he studied anew the English writers on the doctrine of justification. A tract of sixteen pages, which he now drew up for publication, was entitled, "The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith, and Good Works." Favourably thinking, as he did, of the Moravians, he was already on his guard against the Antinomian tendencies of their system. So far as his judgment went with them, he was glad to find corroboration in the Homilies of his own Church. So far as the dangers of Moravian teaching were seen or suspected, he resolved to inquire and observe for himself at their chief settlement in Germany. This journey is briefly sketched in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, Samuel Wesley, a wise and cautious man, heard of his brother's new religious phase, and he connected it with strange reports which had reached him of other conversions attended by unwonted symptoms and doubtful incidents. He wrote to Mrs. Hutton, an old and faithful friend of the Wesleys, expressing surprise that "Jack, who from his baptism had been in the covenant,"

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should now talk of not having been until lately a Christian. His brother's reply was somewhat lame, as he qualified his own hasty language materially. By the word Christian he only meant one who *so* believed as that sin had no more dominion over him.[1] The victory he had lately obtained was "by such a sort or degree of faith as he had not" previously. A victory it unquestionably was, yet it was far from the victory which his German friends had described and led him to expect. "The witness of the Spirit," he added, "I have not, but I wait patiently for it." That "full assurance" which the Moravians spoke of as absolute and as indispensable to the true Christian, Wesley also disclaimed. He only now professed to have "a measure of faith." The more sober Anglican theology was finally reasserting its claims to his regard; and the vision of a sudden and conscious translation into the highest state of the Christian life had passed away.[2]

Here it is convenient to note the fleeting nature of the Moravian influences, especially as regards that doctrine which the Moravians set forth to the exclusion of all other Christian doctrine, and described in misleading language. Years later, John

[1] A peculiar rendering of the word Christian appears again in his Journal of many months later (January, 1739), when he declared that after all he was "not a Christian." Other statements of the same kind, if not due to temporary delusion, must be explained by his use at that time of some well-known words in new or unusual senses.

[2] See Tyer. i. 188–192; Journal, i. 153, 161.

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Wesley acknowledged the wisdom of the warning which Law had given him in 1738. Phrases and high-sounding expressions had lost their power over his mind; and he placed far above all high-flown Moravian speculations the old rule—"He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."[1]

[1] Journal, iii. 294.

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CHAPTER V.

A TRIP TO GERMANY.

WESLEY'S resolve to see some "living witnesses" in their own chosen centre was carried out shortly after the momentous conversations with Bohler. In various ways he had become interested in the religious life of Germany before, as well as subsequent to, the Reformation. The history and the writings of the illustrious John Tauler were well known to him; and he could not fail to observe a strange parallelism between the circumstances of Tauler's spiritual enlightenment and his own. That famous preacher, at a critical time in his career, was in a state of darkness and depression. When all was gloom, within and without, Divine Providence had sent, by a lay brother of low degree, a "word in season," a word of hope and lasting comfort. The "man from Basle" was allowed to place a message of consolation, and with it new life and happiness, in the way of even the most effective and learned preacher of the Rhineland.

Then Wesley was much impressed with the

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virtuous life and earnest goodness of those Moravians with whom the American voyage had made him acquainted. Strongly prepossessed in their favour, he desired to learn from themselves the secret of their piety; and when the way opened in June, 1738, he began the journey which he had long meditated. Accompanied once more by his old college friend Ingham, he crossed over to Rotterdam. Of this and many other places on the route there are graphic notes in the printed Journal. The travellers proceeded slowly through Holland to Cologne, where they observed the vast pile of the unfinished cathedral—"heaps upon heaps—a huge misshapen thing." The worship in this and in the other Roman Catholic churches was not, they remarked, united worship. One man prayed at one shrine, and one at another; and there was no "common" prayer. Taking boats up the Rhine, they admired the demeanour of the boatmen, who, before starting, devoutly prayed for a safe journey; nor was any profanity heard, as amongst men of that class in England. Passing through Mainz and Frankfort, they reached Marienborn, where they were received by Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader—a strange compound of piety, fanaticism, and pride. Wesley, not having sufficiently mastered German, conversed in Latin with Zinzendorf. Passing on through Weimar, the travellers reached Jena, a university city, where they noted that the students wore swords and did not reside in college. Here the two young men

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from Oxford were regarded with some suspicion by officials, who inquired as to their destination. To the question why they wanted to go to Herrnhut, their reply was, "To see the place where the Christians live." At Halle they observed with interest a large and well-managed orphanage; while at Meissen they noted their disapproval of the behaviour of the people in church. Dresden they thought very fine, architecturally; but Wesley asked—as he often did in after life when a fine palace or a noble mansion was shown to him—"Of what good would be all these buildings to the owners of them when the earth should be burned up?"

At last the travellers reached Herrnhut, thirty miles beyond Dresden. They found it a pleasant village of about one hundred dwellings, situate on a fertile hillside. At once they attended some of the Moravian gatherings—a Bible meeting and a love-feast. Daily at five they found instituted an open meeting, at which strangers were welcome; and here the doctrine of justification was again found to be the one constant topic. For several days Wesley conversed with the more experienced of the brethren, taking voluminous notes of all they said for entry in his Journal.

This singular religious brotherhood, though holding to many and special "means of grace" of their own, were in no rivalry with the authorized Church of the locality. On the contrary, they kept up their allegiance as parishioners of Bertholdsdorf, which was about a mile distant. The Sunday

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worship and ritual of the parish church was thus described by Wesley: "At nine began a long voluntary on the organ, closed with a hymn, which was sung by all the people sitting; in which posture, as is the German custom, they sung all that followed. Then the minister walked up to the altar, bowed, sung these Latin words, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo," bowed again, and went away. This was followed by another hymn, sung, as before, to the organ, by all the people. Then the minister went to the altar again, bowed, sung a prayer, read the Epistle, and went away. After a third hymn was sung, he went a third time to the altar, sung a versicle (to which all the people sung a response), read the third chapter to the Romans, and went away. The people having then sung the Creed in rhyme, he came and read the Gospel, all standing. Another hymn followed, which being ended, the minister in the pulpit used a long extempore prayer, and afterwards preached an hour and a quarter on a verse of the Gospel. Then he read a long intercession and a general thanksgiving, which before twelve concluded the service."

On another day they witnessed the solemn interment of a child in "God's acre." Four times they listened to discourses by Christian David, the earliest planter of the settlement, who seems to have been a man of no ordinary kind. He fully unfolded to them the economy and purposes and legal constitution of the place, and its relations to Bertholdsdorf. Another brother, Gradin by name,

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described to them in beautiful language that higher Christian state, the instant attainment of which was supposed to be the denoting mark of every genuine Christian. Wesley would willingly have remained longer amongst these interesting people, but the impulse was strong within him towards work in England. In September he returned by the same route to England, much revived and strengthened, ready to do and suffer all that might be designed for him by Providence.

On reaching London, he sent to his hospitable friends at Herrnhut a valedictory letter, passages of which have some significance. This letter shows that the Wesleys were then invited to preach in some of the churches, and that even in those early days there were many who took their part. It observes in its language the distinction between "ministers" of the Church and "teachers" of the Presbyterian and other religious bodies—a distinction of which Wesley could not lose sight. He also wrote to Zinzendorf a letter, marked by much friendliness and candour, which refers not only to the Christian lives and characters of the Moravians generally, but to several things visible amongst them, of which the writer did not approve. Already he saw that, under an attractive covering, there was much that was unsound—not in doctrine only, but in a tendency to foster "guile and dissimulation," and even worse evils.

In October, 1738, immediately after returning from the German trip, Wesley preached at St.

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George's (East), St. Antholin's, and the Savoy Chapel. But there were some who suspected both the brothers of "strange doctrine," and it became necessary that they should give explanations to the Bishop of London, the learned Dr. Gibson. The bishop listened to and considered their statement. "If by assurance," he said, "you mean an inward persuasion whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation and acceptable, I do not see how any good Christian can be without such assurance." A suspicion of Antinomian tendencies they easily dispelled. The question of rebaptizing, which had given them trouble in Georgia, then came up; and John Wesley even now signified his readiness to rebaptize such as had only received irregular or lay baptism. The brothers then asked advice and information as to the law ecclesiastical. Was a simple religious meeting a "conventicle"? The bishop advised them to read and investigate such matters for themselves; and he promised to listen to no hasty or prejudiced stories in their disfavour, and encouraged them to come to him again. So ended a satisfactory interview, a minute report of which would be infinitely more valuable than many of those lengthy narratives which are preserved in Wesley's Journals. Some weeks later, they had another interview with the bishop, as to which far too little is on record. He was kind and fatherly; he denied that he had spoken harshly of them;

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and he described their friend Whitefield as "pious and well meaning, but too enthusiastic." About this time they also waited on the primate, Dr. Potter, who had known them at Oxford. He also gave them friendly advice.

If the minds of the bishops were favourably inclined, and if many of the clergy wished well to the Methodist movement, why were not the Wesleys kept within the system of the Church?

To this question, now often and sorrowfully asked, the answer is found in the history of the last century. Convocation had died out: and the idea seems to have been lost of the Church as one grand corporate body, deliberating and acting together for the common good. Each prelate and each parochial minister acted timorously, and on his own responsibility. There was no benefit of mutual consultation, and of concerted action. Only in our day have the "sacred synods" been revived, and the smaller assemblies for the diocese and the rural deanery convened.

There being no opportunities of fair deliberation, and very imperfect modes of gaining information in those days, there was much diversity of opinion as to the nature and tendencies of the movement; while there was no attempt to take it in hand and give it a right direction. The first public criticism worthy of the name now appeared in the form of a sermon by the Rev. A. Bedford, preached in St. Lawrence, Jewry, and widely circulated. It reminded those who were in danger of the Moravian

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errors that "assurance" is the privilege of few, and that to profess it savoured of spiritual pride. Who shall say that this warning and others were given in vain? It is undeniable that the Wesleys (whatever many of their followers may have done) did not themselves make any such profession, while they looked with some suspicion on such as ventured to make it.[1]

They were now busily engaged in London for several months. Late in 1738, John Wesley preached in the City and elsewhere. At Islington parish church he was often found; and of this he wrote: "We had the blessed Sacrament every day this week, and were comforted on every side."

The religious society to which he now belonged was composed of some Church-people who were to a certain extent under Moravian influences. Its members assembled every week in Fetter Lane; and its annals, although brief and stormy, are of high interest in Methodist history. In March, 1739, the proposal was made that John Wesley should depart for Bristol, where heathenism was even more rampant than in London. The simple-minded people at Fetter Lane could not readily decide whether to allow of his going, and they resorted to the ancient expedient of drawing lots. On the same question they also had recourse to the casual opening upon some one text of Scripture, a practice which the earlier Journals of Wesley show to have been most common. On this occasion

[1] Tyer. i. 462.

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the texts opened on did not help them, being in no way apposite. It was, however, resolved to allow John Wesley to proceed westwards, where his friend Whitefield had been for some time daily engaged in preaching in the open air. The Bristol journey has some importance, not only because it led to the erection of the first of all the Wesleyan chapels ("preaching-houses" they were then called), but because Wesley there, for the first time, preached with only the blue sky above him for a ceiling.

Fetter Lane soon, however, found the want of his directing hand; and pressing letters told him that all was in confusion. Again and again he endeavoured to restore peace; but his efforts were frustrated by a newly arrived Moravian, Molther by name, who openly scorned good works, and made a jest of going to church. Anxious conversations with this man only made it clearer to Wesley's mind that continued union was impossible with such as neglected public worship and spoke lightly of the sacraments.

The year 1740 found the Wesleys trying to stay the plague, as they called it—trying to convince the little societies not only in Fetter Lane, but at Reading and elsewhere, that contempt for worship, for the ordinances, for the study of Holy Scripture, really amounted to irreligion. In vain did John read and enforce to them the Epistle of St. James; and in vain did Charles preach to them on sacramental doctrine. Their hearts were estranged, and

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a complete and final severance between the Methodists and the Moravians was but a question of time. On the 20th of July, 1740, things came to a crisis, as John Wesley stood up in the midst of the Fetter Lane assembly, and read a paper which he had carefully drawn up, so as to express the points of difference between them. He then left the room, and with it all special leanings towards a system which for nearly five years had dazzled a mental eyesight usually strong. "I have not for many years," he wrote in 1763, "thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith."[1]

Of the London Moravians little more need be said. Wesley continued to think kindly of many of them who were "simple and artless;" but their teachers—the Zinzendorfs and Molthers—he spoke of as "no better than Protestant Jesuits." Count Zinzendorf he regarded as half an impostor, and as potent for mischief. "Cruel and deceitful men," and abounding in guile and selfishness, they appeared to him in later years.[2]

Even Bohler, whose conversations had been of signal use to both the brothers, and who contrasts favourably with other Moravians, shared to some extent in the offences of Zinzendorf. He was compromised, it seems, by "profane balderdash," which rendered the very name of Moravian odious through England.[3] Bohler, of whom little more is heard,

[1] Tyer. ii. 491. [2] Journal, ii. 28, 199, 204.
[3] Tyer. ii. 59, 156.

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went to America; and, later on, he returned to London, where for many years he seems to have been the pastor of a small congregation. The intercourse between him and the Wesleys does not seem to have been renewed, although a kindly feeling towards him remained. Shortly before Bohler's death in 1775, he received an affectionately worded letter from John Wesley. He who wrote it, and he who read it, must have been touched by the memory of their walks together, and their earnest conversations on spiritual matters thirty-seven years earlier, when both of them were, according to the testimony of the philosophic William Law, "extraordinary good young men."

A few words must be added on two of Wesley's intimate friends and early companions in travel. Mr. B. Ingham (of Queen's), who was at one time a curate in Essex, was with the Wesleys in Georgia, and he afterwards took a part, though not a leading one, in the religious revival at home. In 1740 he is found working amongst the ignorant and poor, in an out-of-the-way part of Yorkshire. Consulted by Wesley on a point of difficulty, he sent him a helpful and suggestive letter,[1] which may have been of use against some of the dangerous tendencies of the movement. After this, little is heard of this chosen friend of Wesley's younger days.

Mr. C. Delamotte, a youth of good position and much religious zeal, went also with the Wesleys to Georgia, and he appears to have afterwards settled

[1] Appendix V., "Ingham's Advice."

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down near Hull, where John Wesley visited him occasionally. In 1782, when both were old, his friend described Delamotte as "the same loving, simple man still."[1] Delamotte, who was junior to Wesley, survived him about five years.

[1] Journal, iv. 217.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE ECLECTIC ANGLICAN.

A MINUTE survey of Wesley's opinions on doctrinal matters, and of the sources whence he derived the special portions of his own system, would be beyond the scope of this volume. Incidentally, however, it will be seen that he explored in many and opposite quarters, and that he was often for ideas indebted to those who might be regarded rather as adversaries than as friends. His system, which was a composite one, took some years for its completion; but when any portion was finished, there was no trace of a weak desire for subsequent alterations. The work proceeded slowly and with caution; but once done, it was suffered to stand.

It was natural that the framer of a great religious system should have had long training in theology. Wesley began this study at Oxford in the year 1722. He finished it at Oxford in 1738, when he finally examined the Homilies, the English writers, and the Pauline epistles, as a verifying, and to some

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extent also a rectifying process, after his discussions with the Moravians on the doctrine of justification.[1]

His mission, first to Bristol, then to the whole of England and beyond it, was about to begin. Henceforward he had no time for systematic study. To the end of his days, indeed, he spent his spare half-hours in reading books of all kinds, with more or less of haste; and many hundreds of volumes he skimmed over as he abridged them for the press. But his full stature as a man of learning and a theologian was already attained in the year 1738.

This statement finds ample confirmation by himself. "Forty years ago," he wrote in 1778, "I knew and preached every Christian doctrine which I preach now." His sermons on the Eucharist (1732) and on Christian perfection (1733) he did not attempt to recast or to improve upon. Deeming them complete, he simply reprinted and reissued them in all the later years. In 1763 he wrote as follows:—"I believe there will be found few, if any, real contradictions in what I have published for near thirty years." Strange to say, there are some who, in the face of declarations such as these, continue to assert that Wesley in middle age changed his views on important points, both of doctrine and of Church government.

For some years prior to 1738, there had been with him some fluctuation of view; for example, as to the interpretation of Scripture. He had strayed amongst Genevan, and Lutheran, and Roman writers,

[1] Tyer. iii. 595.

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and was not even content when Providence (as he himself declared) led him to a safe guide. An "entanglement" followed, his exact way of release from which he declared his inability to describe.

The name of William Law again comes in view; for we are told that Wesley rejected "mysticism." What he really rejected was only the mysticism of writers who, like Behmen, slighted the ordinances by the means of grace, and spoke contemptuously of good works.[1] In his later years, Law undoubtedly became tinged with an advanced and dangerous kind of mysticism, from which his earlier and more famous treatises are wholly free. Of these latter, Wesley remarked that they would "remain so long as England stands, almost unequalled standards of the strength and purity of the English language, as well as of sound practical divinity." Law was not only the writer by whom Wesley himself had been so mightily influenced in 1727; he was, according to most competent judgments, the forerunner of the religious revival of the last century—"one who did more to originate it than any other individual, perhaps more than the others collectively."[2] It is necessary to recall such passages of history, for a loosely worded condemnation by Wesley of "mysticism" has led several writers into error. If mysticism be indeed found in the earlier writings of William Law, it is mysticism of a kind which Wesley viewed with admiration. In the better sense of the word, therefore, he never rejected mystic

[1] Tyer. i. 133. [2] Coke and Moore, 17.

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influences. They always clung around the deeper devotional language of the Wesleys.

We have seen that Wesley was at Oxford deeply imbued with the ascetic spirit. Highly austere was his standard, though he modified his own practices to some degree when he entered into family and social life. But this spirit pervades the later volumes of the Journals, as it pervaded his instructions to the preachers, and his rules for the management of Kingswood School.

In the ordinary or modern sense of the word, neither of the Wesleys was a Ritualist. In the last century there were no English clergymen to whom the word can properly be applied, though there were some who strictly adhered to rules and rubrics. The Wesleys were distinguished in this particular way, probably at Oxford, and certainly in Georgia. Throughout life they professed strong attachment to the rules and rubrics of their Church; and although they did not in fact always conform, it would be hard to condemn them of wilful and intentional violation of a rule which they openly and repeatedly professed.

In the Christian Church there always have been those who have attached special importance to the sacraments, as the ordinary channels of Divine grace. Vulgarly, and by those who are not exact in language, such are in our day called "Ritualists." Taking instead the term "sacramentarian," by which the earliest Methodists were known, it is evident to all who are conversant with the early

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Wesleyan literature that, throughout life and to their old age, the two brothers were as fully entitled to that term as they had ever been in their Oxford days.

They wrote no new treatise on the Eucharist, because they found one by Dr. Brevint, Dean of Lincoln, clearly and carefully written many years earlier, which exactly set forth their views. To their edition of this they appended more than one hundred of their sacramental hymns; and of the little volume so put together many editions were issued.[1] Briefly, this volume explained the nature and effects of the Sacrament as a commemorative or "representative sacrifice;" while the hymns set forth a "Real Presence," but without any attempt to define its manner.

This volume, if not now out of circulation yet extremely scarce, was dear to the early Methodists. The very terms used by Dean Brevint may be found in Wesley's own "New Testament Notes:" "This sacrifice once offered is still represented." Many entries in the printed journal also show the old Methodist doctrine of the Eucharist.[2]

The sacrament of Baptism was also by the Wesleys regarded as a "converting ordinance," in

[1] "Few of the books which they published passed through so many editions; for the authors had succeeded in impressing upon the minds of their societies the great importance of frequent communion. They administered the Lord's Supper in London every sabbath day."—Jackson's "C. Wesley," 181, 248.

[2] Journal, iii. 148, 234, 279. See Appendix VI., "The Eucharistical" volume.

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which the inward grace accompanied the outward sign.[1] In his "New Testament Notes"[2] John Wesley wrote that in the Primitive Church the pardon of sins was not ordinarily conveyed in any other way; also that by means of being engrafted in baptism, spiritual life is obtained. In 1756 Wesley republished a tract written long before by his father, which used in regard to the sacrament of Baptism what to modern Methodists appears "strong and startling language."[3] One result, however, has been to leave amongst modern Methodists complete freedom of view as to the nature and effect of this sacrament.[4]

The Wesleys were often accused of violating the rules of their Church. Their answer always was that they varied in nothing of moment. They had "punctually observed the rubrics;" "the Church had nowhere forbidden outdoor preaching, or a resort to lay helpers;" "the doctrines they preached were those of the Church." To such objectors they further declared that they simply set forth "the plain old religion of the Church, now everywhere spoken against under the name of Methodism." Towards the close of their labours they replied to those who charged them with varying from the Church: "In the course of fifty years they had neither premeditately nor willingly varied from it

[1] Journal, ii. 259, 368, 498; also iv. 33. See Appendix VII., "Holy Baptism."

[2] Notes on Acts xxii. 16; also Rom. vi. 3.

[3] Tyer. ii. 264.

[4] Rigg, 42.

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[the Church] in one article of doctrine or discipline," although under stress of peculiar circumstances they had felt themselves compelled to resort to a few irregularities. Lastly, in 1790, we find this: "The Methodists in general are members of the Church of England; they hold all her doctrines, attend her services, and partake of her sacraments."

The Wesleys punctually observed the principal feasts and fasts appointed by the Church.[1] During the festival days of Christmas, and during the octave of Easter, they had "the Lord's Supper every morning;" and All Saints' Day John Wesley kept with a special regard, which was often remarked with some surprise in an age when such regard was rare. It is unnecessary to add that the theory of a National Church they approved, although they deemed that special circumstances justified their somewhat erratic behaviour towards their own. John Wesley (the least rigid of the two) was "a Tory in Church and State"—a High Churchman, and the son of a High Churchman.[2] Too much has been made of some hasty words to the effect that the establishment might fall for him—he would not set it up nor pull it down. His meaning was rather that his chief anxiety was for the Church as a religious body—"the city of God"—and not as an institution legally connected with the State.

The suggestion lately for the first time made that John Wesley was as a Churchman "broad," like the late Archdeacon Hare, raises a cluster of difficulties.

[1] Journal, Christmas 1774, Easter 1777, etc. [2] Rigg, 72.

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Wesley held to the verbal and literal inspiration of the Bible, and to an eternity of future punishment. He believed in the instant interposition, to check or change the course of nature, of an ever-watchful Providence. He believed in the special privileges of an ordained priesthood, and in a supernatural grace abiding in the sacraments. None of these are notes of what is called "Broad Church." Passing on from doctrine to practice, we find that, like Keble, whom he in many ways resembled, he loved daily celebrations and very early services. He insisted on free and open benches in his chapels, so arranging the sexes as that they should be separated during worship. Personally, he held austere views as regarded amusements, expenditure, and general self-denial; and these he imposed on his preachers, in the early years imposing on them celibacy also.

Further to understand the somewhat composite nature of Wesley's system, it is necessary to note Wesley's introduction of usages which were never before found in England. Some of them he borrowed from German Protestant sources. Very few, if any, did he borrow from the Church of Rome. For the memory of many devout Roman Catholics he had reverence; but that Church had added to "the things written in the Book," and all that he wrote of her in her corporate character was unfavourable. He drew up a list of the points in which he deemed that Church to have fallen into serious error.

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When convinced that he had in his early researches come too far down the stream, when satisfied that even general Councils had gone astray, Wesley went back to the days of the undivided or Primitive Church. Other national Churches might be equally deserving of his study; but the fullest details had been preserved of the Church in North Africa, over which St. Cyprian ruled. Therefore he took this as the model for imitation, wherever he judged it necessary to supplement the system of his own Church. The example of the Church of Carthage was ever present to his mind. When in the octave of All Saints, or at Christmas, or in Easter-tide, he daily administered the Holy Communion, he added in his Journal that this was after the example of the Primitive Church. So in numerous other instances. The peculiar institutions of Methodism—such as lay preaching, the issue of the quarterly class-tickets, and of recommendatory notes on removal, the "love-feasts" and the vigils or watch-nights—nearly all of them may be found described more or less precisely in such a work as Bingham's "Antiquities." After primitive days there was, as he considered, little beyond decay and declension in the Christian Church—he only found divided councils and irreligious rulers.[1] Therefore he cared not to look for hints or examples to the Church of the later centuries.

Of Wesley's attachment to his own English Church, it is hardly necessary to say more than that the proofs of it lie broadcast through his

[1] Journal, ii. 300.

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Journals and all other writings. It was strong in middle life as in the early days at Oxford: it was in some respects stronger in his extreme age than ever before.[1]

As to the attempts made to classify Wesley amongst "High" or "Low" or "Broad" Churchmen, they have necessarily failed. It is impossible accurately to label the Churchman of one century with one of the distinguishing titles which are in vogue in another century. Wesley had derived his opinions, and also his ideas of Church government, from many sources; and was therefore in a high degree eclectic. There are eminent prelates and writers amongst us to whom the term may be applied: but John Wesley, a century ago, stood almost alone in this character.

The latest biographer has said that Wesley "was a Puseyite a hundred years before Dr. Pusey flourished."[2] The times were, however, different, and other controversies occupied the minds of men. So far as the analogy is complete (and it is by no means a fanciful one), it is complete for the whole lifetime of Wesley; for, as we have seen, in all material points the theology of the Oxford Ritualist, and of the aged director of all the societies, was unchanged and identical. When we are told that during his Oxford life he was "under a singular combination of influences, partly ritualistic, partly mystical, and always ascetic,"[3] it is well to remember that not to John Wesley only throughout

[1] Rigg, 45. [2] Tyer. i. 148. [3] Rigg, 25.

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his long career, but to many other eminent divines, the same language may be applied. For himself, more than once and in the plainest terms, he disclaimed any change of views; while, during the long span of sixty years, there was a singular uniformity in his habits of thought, of speech, and of daily life.

Although Wesley would hardly be called a Ritualist now, he was scrupulous on some points of ritual—at least, as careful as any of his cotemporaries. A memorandum in his own handwriting,[1] which appears to have followed his final studies of what the Anglican writers had said of the Councils, runs thus:—

"*I believe* [*myself*] *it a duty to observe, so far as I can* [*without breaking communion with my own Church*]—

"1. *To baptise by immersion.*

"2. *To use Water, Oblation of Elements, Invocation, Alms, a Prothesis,*[2] *in the Eucharist.*

"3. *To pray for the faithful departed.*

"4. *To pray standing on Sunday in Pentecost.*

"5. *To observe Saturday and Sunday Pentecost as festival.*

"6. *To abstain from blood, things strangled.*

[1] These papers were first mentioned in "Wesley's Place in Church History" (1870). They were preserved when Wesley more than once looked through all his papers, and might have been published, but for the curious ill fortune which befell the Wesley manuscripts. See Appendix XI., "The Wesley MSS."

[2] *i.e.* Credence table.

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"*I think it prudent* (*our own Church not considered*)—

"1. *To observe the Stations.*[1]

"2. *Lent, especially the Holy Week.*

"3. *To turn to the east at the Creed.*"

This document, which bears no date, is probably little earlier or later than the year 1741. By that time the studies in theology had been completed, and the opinions of the student were settled. On the same sheet of paper appears a list of thirty-four families, probably visited by him about this time; also notes, partly in Latin, partly in English, on the Apostolical Canons and Constitutions. Other sheets of paper of the same kind contain lists of names of persons evidently near Bristol and Newcastle-on-Tyne. It is therefore reasonable to ascribe all these memoranda to the interval after the final studies in theology, and several of them evidently date from the rearrangement of the classes in 1742.

The Wesleys at all times held themselves to be very strict Churchmen on the important points, reserving to themselves (it must be owned) the claim to say what was important. They were not in maturer life so strict as regards rubrics as they had been in Georgia. In 1755 John Wesley pondered over the rubrics and the Canons:—What did they forbid? Was the open disregard of some of them by the authorities equivalent to a dispensation from them? Card-playing was, he remarked,

[1] Partial fasts on Wednesday and Friday of each week, as observed by the Primitive Church.

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forbidden by the Canons, while field-preaching was nowhere forbidden. Yet Church dignitaries, who infringed the rules in many ways, were found to be exacting and censorious where Methodism was concerned. Strict as the Wesleys were on some points, there were doubtless by-rules and usages of their Church which they little regarded. There were also habits of obedience, and deference to the higher authorities, in which they were no more conspicuous as examples than are some energetic and eminent clergymen of our own day.

John Wesley's opinions as to the nature and authority of the Christian ministry were always of the most definite kind. They were sharply brought out into notice, as it became more necessary to remind the growing body of the preachers that their functions, although important, were not those of the sacred ministry. They were "expounders," or, as they would now be called, "lay readers." It is said that towards the close of his life, Wesley became, if possible, more resolute on this point; certainly his expressions[1] were as strong as they could be. Wesley doubted, however, if the threefold order of the ministry, although found in the Holy Scriptures, was divinely appointed, and for all time. His final theory of the episcopal office,[2] derived, it seems, from Stillingfleet's "*Irenicon*," was one which

[1] In what is called the "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram Sermon." See page 160.

[2] New Testament Note on Acts xx. 17: "Perhaps a bishop and his clergy resembled the rector of a large parish and his curates."

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recognized Presbyterian orders as sufficient. This opinion was not very decidedly expressed; and he declared episcopacy to be "both scriptural and apostolical." It appears to have been favoured by him rather because the higher or Anglican view of episcopacy logically excludes many of the reformed communities, such as the Scottish kirk and the Lutherans.

At the end of 1745 their brother-in-law, Mr. Hall, whom they knew to be "unstable as water," advised the Wesleys to secede from the Church. He endeavoured to persuade them that regular ordination conveyed no special authority to minister. Their reply, drawn up with evident care, gives the clearest sketch which appears in any of their writings of the nature of an episcopal Church, and of the authority of her ministers. This, after being written by John Wesley (who was somewhat less rigid on such points than his brother), was placed in his Journal, where it has always been reprinted. Some of the more important passages run thus:—

"It would not be right for us to administer either Baptism or the Lord's Supper, unless we had a commission so to do from those bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles.

"There is, and always was in every Christian Church . . . an outward priesthood . . . and an outward sacrifice offered by men authorized to act as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

[1] Tyer. ii. 244.

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"The threefold order of ministers . . . is not only authorized by its apostolical institution, but also by the written Word."

This important document proceeds to admit that some of the minor rules and practices of the Church, and especially of the ecclesiastical courts, were indefensible.

Stress has been laid by some writers upon a certain essay by Peter King, which Wesley read early in the year 1746, while on a journey to Bristol. He then noted in his Journal King's "supposition" (not proof) that the early bishops were not of essentially different order to those elders over whom they ruled. Evidently this view is not inconsistent with an exalted estimate of the office of presbyter, and of the "power of the keys." It is easily explained by the fact that King was a young student of a Presbyterian college when he wrote the essay. In after life he altered his views,[1] became a Churchman, and, although not of remarkable abilities, attained to the Chancellorship.

Peter King's juvenile essay deserved some notice, for it described minutely that Primitive Church which Wesley loved. In chapter iv. of the little volume the author correctly states that in each city there was a *summus Sacerdos*, or chief priest, having authority over a number of inferior clergy. Anglicans will not, however, assent to the next statement, or, as Wesley called it, "supposition,"

[1] Hockin's essay, 3rd edition, 12. See Appendix VIII., "King's Essay."

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that though the elders were as assistants or curates to the bishop, and were under his control, yet that their inferiority was only one of station or degree, the two orders being essentially equal. It would, King added, have been "impudent and usurping for a presbyter to exercise any function without the bishop's leave." To intrude on the parish of another was, he said, a "detestable act of schism," as well as a breach of peace, unity, and order. Perhaps these latter passages may account for the fact that Wesley rarely quoted from, and never republished, this essay. He laid the book aside; and the next day we find him deep in Butler's "Analogy."

In the following year (1747) there appeared in the Minutes of Conference several questions and answers on this subject, drawn up, perhaps, not by Wesley, but by an inferior hand. They possess for any purpose little value or significance, except that they contain an important admission. The threefold order of ministers was, they declared, plainly described in the New Testament, and they obtained in all the Churches of the apostolic age. This admission that episcopacy was always found in the early Church repeatedly appears through the Methodist annals; and none who could make it can fairly be styled a Presbyterian.

On one occasion Wesley inquired of a friend whether a presbyter could ordain. He desired advice, he said, being doubtful of his own understanding. The "supposition" of Peter King he doubtless had in his mind; but he dared not to

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accept it as a certainty, still less could he bring himself to act upon it. His doubt was soon, as it seems, resolved in the way of which all Churchmen must approve; and for thirty years no more was heard in Methodism of the supposed right of presbyters to ordain.

More than once John Wesley (differing from his brother Charles) threw doubt on the succession of bishops from the apostolic days. His remarks on this are not free from obscurity, as it may fairly be contended that what he questioned was the authenticity of the list of the names of bishops given for any one see, and not the fact of the succession itself. That a man, usually credulous to a fault, should have been sceptical here and there, is worthy of note: nor was his unwillingness to accept the succession of bishops the only instance of unreasonable doubt which we find in Wesley. He refused to believe in that narrative of Captain Cook's adventures in distant seas, which is now accepted by all as perfectly true.[1]

If Wesley meant that the succession of bishops is not to be proved as a problem of Euclid is proved, he was doubtless right. But probabilities enter largely into the conclusions arrived at in daily life; and even the courts of justice are accustomed to act on many presumptions. Amongst these is a presumption, having the force of a legal rule, that *things are presumed to have been rightly, properly, and lawfully done.* So strong is the pre-

[1] Journal, iv. 6.

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sumption that every Christian bishop has been duly consecrated by senior bishops, that even Lord Macaulay, while quite indifferent as to the *doctrine* of the succession, declared the *fact* of it to be as well established as any other fact of history. He knew that the common sense of mankind has always rejected the notion of demanding strict proof of all the actual facts which constitute heirship, pedigree, and the title to possessions. In all such inquiries the evidence accepted is that which Bishop Butler calls *probable* evidence, as distinguished from *demonstrative*. On evidence of the probable kind Christianity itself, to a certain extent, bases her claims to acceptance; and there are few facts in the Christian history more firmly established than the succession of bishops in office as handed down from the apostles. Whether Wesley perceived this or not is, however, of little moment, since he held most firmly to rules which are quite sufficient to uphold an episcopal system. There was, he held, a succession of ministers; and he held high views as to "the sacerdotal office." Whether the senior ministers who ruled over the rest were a distinct body, or whether (as Stillingfleet and Peter King thought) they differed in seniority and not in intrinsic rank, was of small moment, when the avowal was made, and always adhered to, that the rule of bishops has prevailed always—even from the apostolic age.

Lastly, we may observe in Wesley as a theologian two distinguishing notes—his breadth of charity, and his intense regard for the Holy Scriptures.

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As he grew older, he attached less and less value to mere opinions. In 1738 he had looked upon exact views of the doctrine of justification as of great moment. Years later, he came to look on this rather as a matter of nomenclature. "Imputed righteousness" and "justification by faith" he found to be rather phrases than realities, as William Law had told him long before; and men who had never heard of them, or who even denied them, might be secure within the fold.[1] What were these, then, he asked, but high-sounding forms of speech, without determinate meaning? Opinions were, he said, little regarded in heaven. Many heretical persons had been highly favoured; and with them he hoped to sit down in the kingdom of his Father. On Marcus Antoninus, and on other "seekers after God" of old heathen days, gleams of the Divine favour had rested; and the Creator would certainly punish no man for doing what he could not avoid, or for omitting what he knew not of. In modern times there had been true piety in the hearts and lives of some who held very heterodox opinions. What he longed to see was the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. "Let my soul be with these Christians," he said, "wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinions they are of."[2] Charming is the brief note of a conversation which he held in 1760 with General Cavaignac, a French Roman Catholic. As the latter listened to Wesley, he said, more than

[1] Journal, iii. 294, 297. [2] Southey, ii. 67, 68.

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once, and with emotion, "Why, this is my religion! there is no true religion besides it!"

Last in order, though first in importance, is Wesley's supreme regard for Holy Scripture. He firmly believed in the truth of every line, and every word, of a book in which, he said, mistake was not possible.[1] Where the Book was silent, he looked for guidance to the teaching and tradition of the early Christian Church. But where the Book had spoken, he accepted its utterance with the reverence due to an authority paramount, and far above question. His mental attitude towards the Book of all books was expressed by himself[2] in these noble words:—

"I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God. I want to know one thing—the way to heaven. God Himself has condescended to teach me the way. He hath written it down in a book. O, give me that book! at any price, give me the book of God! . . . In His presence I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights, and ask Him to let me know His will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

[1] Journal, iv. 77. [2] Pref. to "Sermons," vol. i.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE PARISH CHOSEN.

THE year 1739 was spent at Bristol, a city which Wesley always liked, and which may almost claim to be the metropolis of old Methodism. He preached at Clifton, and in some of the city churches; but his labours were chiefly amongst such as had no physician. The Kingswood collieries were at that time some miles distant from any church, and their population was more neglected than the Indians of Georgia. George Whitefield, whose simple enthusiastic nature had led him to preach amongst these English heathens, now embarked for America; and his friend and elder now stepped into the gap, and opened out at these collieries his mission, a mission committed to him by no human hands. Now did Wesley preach in open air for the first time, as his friend had done.[1] What at first seemed strange, and even repugnant to his sense of decorum, soon became

[1] Tyerman errs in calling this "a shocking departure from Church rules." Outdoor preaching was once common, and the Church has never spoken against it.

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easy; and the habit so formed was never wholly discontinued.

This Kingswood campaign brought up many new questions to his view. Whither was his call? How could he be most useful? Should he settle down in one spot, like his brother clergy? Should he, on the contrary, carry the Good News into many other parts of the land, at the risk of being pitied as an enthusiast, and frowned at as an intruder?

At this crisis of his public life Wesley wrote down the reasons which influenced his decision.[1] In substance they were as follows:—Church order, which forbids intrusion into other parishes, must be disregarded at a time of prevailing wickedness, with which the Church is quite unable to grapple. "God commands me," he said, "according to my power, to instruct the ignorant and reform the wicked. . . .

I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH,

thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation."

To some who questioned the wisdom of this resolve, he gave full reply. As to settling down again at Oxford, he had neither pupils nor regular duty in a college. As to taking a cure, none had been offered him. As to preaching in churches, the invitations were few—less frequent than formerly. Available rooms or public halls were not

[1] Journal, i. 189.

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large enough to contain those who flocked to hear, therefore open-air sermons were of necessity. This preaching abroad, of which many of their friends disapproved, was not from choice; but it had done much good, and therefore, at all risks, it must be continued. The Wesleys declared that they had no grudge against the authorities; nor did they wish to be rivals, much less opponents, of the parochial clergy. Their only object was to show the way of life to those who know not of it—to those who would not, or could not, come into the churches. Such was their excuse when they began their irregular mission.

The state of England was certainly alarming. Divine service was generally neglected, and (as we have seen) devout students could not enter St. Mary's without being jeered at by the idlers at the church door. Few observers of the age were more keen-witted than Oliver Goldsmith; and this was his account of the English people:—

"No person who has travelled will contradict me when I aver that the lower order of mankind in other countries testify on every occasion the profoundest awe of religion, while in England they are scarcely awakened into a sense of its duties, even in circumstances of the greatest distress. This dissolute and fearless conduct, foreigners are apt to attribute to climate and constitution. May not the vulgar, being pretty much neglected in our exhortations from the pulpit, be a conspiring cause? Our divines seldom stoop to their mean capacities;

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and they who want instruction most, find least in our religious assemblies."

A committee of the House of Lords sat to inquire into "the present notorious immorality and profaneness," and the evidence brought before them was such that parts of it could not even be printed. There was, according to such high authority, a greater neglect of worship and a greater desecration of Sunday than had ever been known in England. Idleness, gambling, intoxication, had increased alarmingly. Beyond a full measure of crimes of the kinds found all over Europe, England had special disorders of her own—luxury, profanity, open apostasy from the Christian faith.[1] The Church was then under many disabilities; and it was found almost impossible to plant new chapels, even where the growth of population had rendered them necessary. Only in London was any organized and serious effort made to increase the number of the churches. Many of the bishops were absentees from their dioceses; and a large proportion of the clergy had all the habits of country squires, and paid little attention to their spiritual duties.

These facts must be weighed by such as incline to censure the course taken by the Wesleys. Doubtless the bishops gave to them full consideration; for not one member of the episcopal bench ever issued an inhibition, or took any legal step to check the proceedings of the Methodist clergy. There were, indeed, remonstrances now and then on the part of

[1] Tyer. i. 174, 503.

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Church dignitaries, against certain fanatical or wild tendencies. Charges, sermons, and tracts contained warnings against excess and over-enthusiasm. These were of service in restraining the movement within the bounds of reason and sobriety. But the assertion frequently met with, that the English Church or that the bishops "cast out the Wesleys," can only now proceed from gross ignorance or from malice.

The movement had just begun, when the learned Bishop Gibson sounded a note of warning in a pastoral letter. It was written with Whitefield in view, and not the Wesleys. Passages were quoted showing that the former had laid claim to a new inspiration, to the spirit of prophecy, and to an extraordinary commission from heaven. Whitefield was an ardent and impassioned speaker, rhetorical, and little accustomed to weigh phrases which were perhaps susceptible of an interpretation not intended by him. His reply to the bishop was respectful and quiet in tone. He denied that he had preached any doctrine but that of the English Church, yet he boldly put forward his claim to spread the Good News amongst all men and everywhere, both in season and out of season.

Just at this time John Wesley was sojourning in Bristol, and was in communication with the bishop of that diocese, who was uneasy as to the painful scenes often witnessed at these revival sermons. Hearers were convulsed and contorted, and there were cries and groanings which were beyond any control. These "strange scenes" have accompanied

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revival services, even in our own time; and they have always had the effect of creating much doubt and disapproval. That for some years these phenomena rendered Methodism an object of just suspicion cannot be doubted. In this instance the bishop of the diocese, disliking strange scenes arising from over-excitement, gave Wesley a hint that he had no duty in that locality. Wesley now told the bishop that he had been ordained as a fellow of a college, and not for any one parish. His commission was in general terms—to preach in the Church universal. Doubtless he bore in mind the answer of Bishop Potter to the question put to him at Oxford five years previously.[1]

Eight years later, Wesley had to vindicate his course more elaborately, and in the form of a pamphlet, for he was pointed at in an episcopal charge. In powerful language did he plead the duty which lay on him of doing his utmost to save "poor souls for whom Christ died." At Moorfields (the favourite place near London for open-air preaching) there were, he said, ten thousand of such lost sheep. If Dr. Bulkeley, the incumbent of that parish, would see to them, he (Wesley) would go elsewhere and call other sinners to repentance. In concluding this apologetic letter to the aged bishop, Wesley referred to the solemn responsibility which lay on both of them in regard to such as were perishing in their iniquity.[2] In other places also Wesley defended the line of action which he had taken with

[1] See page 20, ante. [2] Tyer. i. 563.

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much force and ingenuity. Open-air preaching was, he said, resorted to by them, not from choice, but as an expedient, and they kept to it simply because by it they were able to reach those who could not otherwise be reached. Surely preaching in this way must be better than none?[1] He often noted that he preferred to preach in a church. Evidently it was more regular and decorous, and there was a freedom from noise and from the chance of wanton interruption. On the other hand, as the celebrity of the preacher grew, large crowds were gathered when his arrival was made known, and the church, even if placed at his disposal, was rarely large enough. A market-place, or, better still, a capacious town hall, was often chosen: and it was observed that many persons listened there how would have refused to enter the doors of a church.[2]

Resuming the chronological order of events, we find that the learned Wheatley was amongst those who criticized the Methodists, near the outset of the movement. Some facts reached his ear which led him to describe them as "rapturous enthusiasts." He and other learned divines of his day had no actual knowledge of that which they described, and they did not foresee that, outliving its early period of crude excitement, Methodism would become a steady power in modern civilization, and a great fact in religious history. Dr. Stebbing, about the same time, published a sermon which contained earnest cautions

[1] Journal, ii. 490; Coke and Moore, 146.
[2] Journal, ii. 52, 109, 158.

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against "tumultuous assemblies" and "vain boastings." He also issued, through the medium of the S.P.C.K., a warning to the Methodists, which could not but have exerted a useful influence. This writer was the first to point out that the laymen concerned in the movement would grow opinionated and proud of their own gifts, finding at length "the pale of the Church too strait for them."

That warnings of this kind were excusable, and were even necessary, is clear from candid statements by Wesley himself. When he preached, at Bristol or elsewhere, many of his hearers sank to the floor in "violent agonies" or convulsions. If of the stronger sex, they often roared loudly; and the scene defied description when many of such cases were found together. The Wesleys could not understand these phenomena—were inclined to attribute them to Satanic power; in any case, regarded them as permitted by Providence. They had, they said, no right to dictate the mode of the reception of their message, and its effects on hearers. For such reasons, though not personally encouraging the "strange scenes," they did not set their faces with firmness against them. It is important to add that St. Cyprian, whom they professed to follow, always claimed for the Church of his day the power of casting out devils. He described the howling and groaning as the evil spirits were ejected from the possessed persons, when adjured, and in answer to prayer. Only after the lapse of years did the Wesleys fully realize the truth that a good work may

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equally proceed "in quietness and confidence," without physical excitement or factitious uproar.

The verdict to be passed on these special incidents of the movement must be unfavourable. They had, moreover, the undoubted effect of arraying in opposition to it most of the learned and eminent divines of the period, who were apt to mistrust "rapturous enthusiasts." The bishops, who were always courteous to the Wesleys, and tolerant of their peculiarities, could not but hesitate to approve of a movement marked by such wild occurrences. They were naturally at a loss to reply when the Wesleys consulted them, "for they did not like to sanction irregularities, or to deal harshly with men whose intentions were pure, and whose Churchmanship was indisputable."[1] To open-air preaching there could, of course, be little demur, since there was no law against it, but many precedents for it, both in Scripture and in modern Church history.

The mission was not only to the degraded population of the colliery districts; it also involved a gathering up of those religious societies which had existed for nearly half a century, and were still found in many parts of the kingdom. There were not a few of these societies remaining, though some had come to an end, while others had developed into great associations—the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. Still there were religious societies—inner circles within the Church—which welcomed the movement, and with which Wesley was in close intercourse in

[1] Jackson's "C. Wesley."

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London and elsewhere. One important part of his work was to gather up these scattered threads into one; and hence the phrase "The United Societies," which was commonly used in the last century in reference to Wesley's new brotherhood.[1] Rooms suitable for their meetings were with difficulty found; and one by one large, but simply planned and inexpensive, "preaching-houses" were erected. In 1739 the first of them was built, under John Wesley's direction, in the horse-fair of Bristol. In the same year he purchased an extensive but ruinous shed in Windmill Street, near Finsbury Square, which, having been formerly used for the casting of guns, was known, and will always in history be known, as "The Foundry." This became the head-quarters of Wesley, and the chief meeting-place of the London Methodists. It was thoroughly repaired, and on the 23rd of July, 1740, Wesley and the other seceders from Fetter Lane met here for the first time. The arrangements were of the simplest and severest kind, plain benches only being provided. There were no pews for those who disliked "plain benches;" and, in truth, there were few Methodists in those early days who were not of the poorer ranks. This was what would now be called a mission chapel, of humble pretensions, with rooms adjoining in which the classes met, and other

[1] The Church societies which were in the end absorbed by Methodism have been described frequently. See Church Congress Report, 1868, p. 185; see also Appendix III., "The Religious Societies."

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rooms adapted as residences. Here John Wesley lived (when in London) for more than thirty years.

Daily at 5 a.m. a bell rang for the early service; and again it rang at nine in the evening. The Methodists were all expected and enjoined to attend their parish churches on the Sunday, especially when there was to be an administration of Holy Communion. In no sense was there any rivalry with the parish church, their own system being in all ways but supplementary. The devotions of the old Methodist chapels "were meant to be a mere supplement to the more perfect devotional service of the Church;"[1] and the hours were arranged with this object strictly in view. In very rare cases was the service allowed during church hours. This was contrary to general rule, and Wesley always disapproved of it: "We have profited nothing by our service in church hours. . . . I do not know that it has done more good anywhere in England."[2]

The Foundry was an important place, as the centre of Methodistic life; but Wesley only bestowed on it a share of his time and attention. Frequently did he traverse the road between London and Bristol, even when the Foundry was but newly open; for the Moravian leaven had been at work amongst the societies,[3] and there were threatenings of Antinomian danger. No sooner was this anxiety

[1] Tyer. ii. 576.

[2] Journal, iv. 387. This, of course, does not apply to the two or three chapels in which the services were conducted by clergymen.

[3] Tyer. i. 320.

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at an end, than a great dispute arose amongst the Methodists, some of whom held Arminian and some Calvinistic views. Election, Predestination, Free Grace: these terms, little heard now, towards the middle of the last century had in all religious circles become familiar as household words. They were inscribed on the banners of large armies of disputants. Wesley had always been a firm Arminian; more than this, he was an obstinate and pugnacious Arminian. He was incapable of any disguise; and some of his outspoken phrases were painful to Whitefield, who was Calvinistic, though he had never read the writings of John Calvin. He received from Whitefield a letter, which was one long cry of sorrow, imploring him, with many protestations of humility and love, to shun "the decrees," and so avert a public severance between them. Other letters passed between these two; but the chasm was daily widening, and it soon became manifest to all. As the logomachy, or war of words, proceeded, there was some loss of temper, and a much greater loss of time and energy. In 1741 came the final separation, the Methodists forming themselves into two camps. The Calvinists followed Whitefield, and spread rapidly in Wales, but have never been so strong in England. They may, however, claim the limited but highly respectable religious community which still bears the name of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; and they have leavened all the ranks of Independency. The Arminians—that is to say, those who held that all the

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children of Adam may be saved if they will—adhered to the Wesleys: and it so happens that those who have split off into new Methodist bodies from time to time, have always firmly held Arminian views. These disputes need not be enlarged upon, although it will be necessary to glance hereafter at the part taken in them, twenty years later, by Fletcher of Madeley.

The period 1740–1742 is marked by the arrangement and consolidation of "the United Societies," which at a later period took the name of him who was their re-constructor, and in this sense their founder. Many were already in existence. As to the whole, he now combined, enlarged, reorganized, and ruled over them. The "classes" were divided or more carefully organized, first in Bristol, afterwards in other places. Wesley placed over each a trusted lay follower as "leader." It was the duty of the leader to meet the others once a week, to pray with them, and to give them advice and, if necessary, reproof. The leader also received from each that stated weekly contribution which has been a powerful factor in the system. Once a quarter each class was visited by Wesley or one of his assistants. Lists, in Wesley's handwriting, of the members of society in various places, which appear to have been made about this time, show the attention to details which marked his character.[1]

About this time Wesley, referring to the many places in which the churches were not thrown open

[1] See Appendix XI., "The Wesley MSS."

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to them, addressed the clergy thus:—"We do not desire any of you to let us preach in your church either if you believe us to preach false doctrine, or if you have the least scruple;" and he proceeded to explain that their inability to preach in the churches left them, as they considered, no choice but to preach in the open air or in private houses. It would not be correct to say that the Wesleys were, even at this early time, when their motives were misunderstood, systematically excluded from the churches. The truth was, that the clergy generally regarded their movement in a doubtful rather than in a hostile spirit; while in many places great courtesy was shown to them. Charles Wesley's visit to Yorkshire in 1743 well illustrates the different kinds of treatment experienced. At Sheffield the mob pulled down the preaching-house. Charley Wesley, who was very unlikely to make so grave an accusation without reason, attributed this to the open hostility of the parochial clergy. On reaching Leeds all was changed; the clergy probably wishing to mark their disapproval of what had occurred at Sheffield. Five of them who were at the old church treated him with marked attention, and they requested him to assist in the Celebration.

The "watch-night" at first was observed one evening of every month; but these unseasonable gatherings gave rise to idle gossip. Ultimately the last night only in each year was kept as a watch-night. The solemnity and appropriateness of such

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a service has always drawn to it many who take no part in other Methodist services, and it has led to imitation in many and opposite quarters.

Wesley now opened a dispensary for the poor, and at a later period a loan fund. In the Foundry premises he opened that bookselling department which every year became more important and remunerative. Wesley's Journals and his sermons, tracts, and other writings; the hymns of his brother, very numerous, and published in various forms; many other works, large and small, some of them original, but more frequently compilations or abridgments—all these increased, and were in requisition all over the land. The "book-room" was really a very large publishing business, of which, however, Wesley never personally received any of the growing profits. It is needless to multiply proofs of a talent for organizing and directing which has rarely been equalled.

The Methodist doctrine of "perfection" cannot be wholly overlooked in any survey of the movement. "Sinless perfection," it was called by Whitefield and by others; but Wesley himself never used a term for which there seems to be no authority. It is perhaps unfortunate that he brought the word "perfection" into common use, for there never was a clear definition of its meaning.[1] As John explained it, there were hundreds of excellent men and women known to him, to whom the word might

[1] "His statements of this doctrine . . . appear to be philosophically obscure, if not sometimes inconsistent."—Rigg, 39.

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be applied. Charles, as he was accustomed to set the standard higher, could never find any whom he regarded as perfect. Yet the doctrine was preached from all Methodist pulpits; and it was regarded as something specially committed to their trust. Here a phrase was invested with undue importance, it not being remembered that the *thing signified* by the phrase had always been found in the teaching of the Church, and often exemplified in the lives of her sons. Wesley's adversaries in the polemical field chose to misrepresent the doctrine; and some of his own people thought and spoke of it in a way of which he could not approve. But, apart from the incautious use of a misleading word, there seems to have been little of substantial error in the Methodistic teaching. The learned Bishop Gibson was satisfied with the explanations which Wesley gave on this point, and advised him to explain his doctrine of perfection more clearly, for the benefit of others. We have seen that Wesley did not hold himself up as an example of the higher Christian life, while he looked with some suspicion on others who did so. In his opinion the saintly life had in modern times been exemplified by De Renty, whose Christian zeal and charity were absolutely without limit, and whose life was that of an ascetic. He also spoke with praise almost enthusiastic of Madame Guyon, and of Fénelon and some other eminent Roman Catholics. Their Church he did not profess to admire; but as he grew older he thought less of the opinions held, and more of the Christian life shown forth.

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At first sight it appears strange that the Wesleys, who were thoroughly imbued with the principles of the Anglican Reformation, should have been widely suspected, and openly accused, of "popery." The times were not favourable to the rapid spread of correct information. Any strange and absurd delusion, if once started, had a long run, and was with difficulty in the end overtaken. The word ritualism was unused and almost unknown; and religious innovators of the time of the second George were readily spoken of as "papists." No divine of that or any other century brought in more "innovations" than John Wesley; and both their origin and their object were thoroughly misunderstood by the general public.

The sacramental teaching of the brothers, and the austere habits which they recommended to others, and themselves practised in an age of luxury, had much to do with the accusation of popery. Their services at unusual hours, very early and very late; their select band-meetings, around which was an air of mystery; their frequent Eucharists, and their prayers for the faithful dead—all helped to foster the delusion. For many years they were suspected of belonging to some Romanist order; and even educated persons shared in this curious error. When the uprising of the friends of the young Prince Charles Edward caused a panic, some magistrates suspected Wesley of complicity in the plot matured at St. Germains; and he was solemnly questioned as to his loyalty, and

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his willingness to sign the "declaration against popery." He at once professed his readiness to comply, and was not further troubled.

Of those who helped to attach this suspicion upon the Wesleys and their movement, the most important was Bishop Lavington, of Exeter. In 1749 he published, without prefixing his name, a book against this "dangerous and presumptuous sect." They were, he fancied, doing the work of the Roman Catholics, with whom they had so much in common. Replies quickly appeared, at first by Whitefield and Perronet. Lastly, John Wesley responded, but not with his accustomed calmness and urbanity. His reply, printed in 1750, made far too much of the fact that the bishop's criticism was anonymous. In truth, Wesley himself is stated to have at least once withheld his name while making a sharp controversial attack.[1] He was, however, not far wide of the truth, when he said that the bishop knew little or nothing about Methodism. It is gratifying to find that twelve years later Wesley met his old antagonist in the cathedral of Exeter. The sermon on that day, and the playing of the organ, he praised; but, above all, he rejoiced to meet at the Lord's Table the bishop; and in a fine spirit he closed the entry in his Journal with the words, "O, may we sit down together in the kingdom of our Father!"[2]

Of the details of the system so consolidated between the years 1739 and 1742, little more may

[1] Tyer. ii. 93, 96. [2] August 29, 1762.

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here be said. There is, however, one point—the employment of lay preachers—one then regarded as of novelty and importance, which cannot be passed over, even in the briefest sketch of Methodism. Whitefield had accepted the aid of some lay preachers in 1739. Two of them, Messrs. Cennick and Humphreys, for a time helped Wesley in the western counties; but they soon left him, being strong adherents of Calvinism. The first lay preacher, of Wesley's own following, and after the separation from Whitefield, appears to have been Thomas Maxfield. His help in the pulpit of the Foundry was, after full consideration of the step, accepted heartily by John Wesley, and more doubtfully by his brother. If they could have obtained a sufficient number of clerical assistants, the case would have presented itself differently to their minds. But at this time very few of the clergy regarded the movement with favour; nothing, therefore, remained (as they argued) but to select laymen of suitable "gifts and graces," laborious and zealous, fitted "to give help to the poor sheep whose shepherds heeded them not."

The number of the lay preachers increased rapidly; and before long Wesley distributed them all over England. They were sent out two and two, and were stationed for a year at a time in their "circuit" or definite tract of country. At first the circuits were very large, but there has been a process of subdivision always going on. London and Bristol held their original position as the chief

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centres, receiving a large portion of the personal attention of the Wesleys. Next in importance came Newcastle-on-Tyne, a place for which Wesley always had a special regard.

Of his first visit to Newcastle and the North, of his sermons delivered "near the pump in Sandgate," and on the hill close to the hospital, graphic accounts by contemporaries have been preserved.[1] He often revisited the town, being warmly welcomed there, and finding, year after year, a more rapid increase in the number of his adherents than in other towns.

On his way southwards, he remained some days at Epworth. The rector is not mentioned; and Mr. Rumley, whose name so often appears in the Journals, was probably the curate-in-charge. Wesley was not permitted to preach in the well-remembered church of his younger days; but in the churchyard, and standing on his father's tomb, he addressed the largest throng ever seen in the village.[2] The scene was affecting, as old familiar faces were reoognized, and many sad recollections awakened. "Let no one," he wrote in his Journal, "think his labour is lost, because the fruit does not immediately appear. Nearly forty years did my father labour here, but he saw little fruit of all his labours. I took some pains among this people too. . . . Now the fruit appears." His own relatives

[1] Tyer. i. 386.

[2] This scene appears on the marble memorial in Westminster Abbey.

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had left the place, but he found Mr. Whitelamb, who had married one of the sisters, and who was now serving in that quiet village of Wroote, where John Wesley thirteen years before had held his only curacy. Whitelamb was delighted to renew the intercourse with Wesley, whom he described in a letter "as heretofore the gentleman, the friend, the brother, and the Christian."

The venerable Mrs. Susanna Wesley died shortly after her son's return from this northern journey. He read the service at her interment in the adjacent cemetery of Bunhill Fields, where her tomb may be seen.

Methodism was now—amidst evil report and good report — becoming a fact in English history. Pamphlets attacking or defending it became numerous. The "United Societies" became prominent in the larger towns; and their modest preaching-houses, for the early and the late services, multiplied on all sides. That public attention was drawn to them appeared from the announcement of a new farce, thus entitled, "Trick upon Trick, or Methodism Displayed." The clergy were much divided in opinion, but most of them were quiet, tolerant, and observant. There were some exceptions. At Epworth the curate would not allow John to come to the Holy Table; while at Bristol, a like indignity was cast upon Charles, and on some of those devout and reclaimed colliery men of Kingswood who owed so much to the irregular mission. Charles Wesley, rigidly attached as he was to

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Church order, deemed this a sufficient excuse for himself administering the Sacrament to them in the preaching-house. In many other places the Methodists were frowned upon, and "preached at," by the parochial clergy. Equally hostile were some of the Dissenting ministers.[1] One of the latter, doubtless misled by Wesley's well-known tendencies towards "asceticism and ritualism," publicly declared that Methodism was "but a new form of popery."

The first of the series of annual Conferences of the Methodistic clergy took place in London at the end of June, 1744. It was attended by the two Wesleys, and by four of their clerical friends—Messrs. Piers, Hodges, Meriton, and Taylor.[2] They spent several days in deliberation and in prayer; and there was an administration of Holy Communion to all the London societies, then estimated at 2000 persons. Amongst the resolutions passed at this first Conference was one binding them to fidelity to the Church. Rules were drawn up for the guidance of the lay preachers, and of those inner band-societies which were selected from the general body of the Methodists.

In 1745, a time of great public anxiety, Wesley went again to Newcastle. The news of the defeat of the king's troops at Preston Pans, in Scotland, had led to new warlike preparations, and a royal army

[1] Journal, March 12th and 28th, 1743.

[2] The last named a descendant of Rowland Taylor, burnt in the Marian persecution. Four out of the forty lay preachers were also present at the first Conference.—Tyer. i. 442.

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was encamped near the Tyne. Wesley did not omit to preach in the camp; and to the Hanoverian soldiers, who could not understand the sermon, he afterwards addressed some exhortations in their own tongue.

By this time Wesley's labours were marked by some uniformity of system; his tours of direction of the societies began to be marked out with regularity, so that his adherents through the land might almost know when to expect his presence. Bristol and Newcastle always were favoured spots. Other cities of equal importance saw much less of Wesley. Even Birmingham and Liverpool are rarely mentioned in the Journals—the people there were less sympathetic—and he did not feel at home in a town which, like Yarmouth, appeared to him a "cold, uncomfortable place." His happiest days were spent where the people were hearty and enthusiastic. Such a district was Cornwall, where Methodism took root as in congenial soil. Amongst English towns, there was perhaps none where Wesley felt more at home than Macclesfield. The hearty welcome there, followed by lively and crowded services, made Wesley's frequent visits the chief events in the annals of the town. Of his journeys to Scotland and Ireland mention is made in subsequent chapters.

For twenty years or more these English tours of inspection were mostly performed on horseback, the "machine" or stage-coach being sometimes used. Wesley had some wonderful escapes, for he was a careless rider; and, neglecting his reins, he held in

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one hand a book, in the other a pencil, while on the road. His Journals contains many of those adventures which an ardent and too hasty traveller on indifferent highways could not but meet with; and they were such as to confirm his own belief in a special protection of Providence. The work undertaken on these tours was of the most unremitting kind. His arrival in any town, whether expected or not, was quickly made known to all; and on the same evening a crowd assembled in the town-hall, or in the market-place, and he rarely omitted to preach. There were also the classes to visit, and interviews to be held with the chief members of the society. All this time a large correspondence was kept up on all kinds of topics. Frequently differences had to be inquired into and adjusted, and a variety of other matters, both spiritual and temporal, duly attended to. It is no exaggeration to say that so long as he lived Wesley was the autocrat and arbiter, to whom everything was referred, and whose decision was accepted always with willingness, and during his last years with a kind of reverence without parallel in English history.

Of quiet days John Wesley had few; but he required them less than other men. Now and then he retreated to the vicarage of Shoreham (Kent), and spent a tranquil day with his adviser, Vincent Perronet. In his old age he is found now and then in other calm resting-places, at Balham and at Lewisham. But these days of leisure were exceptional. Firmly knit and strong in texture,

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bodily and mental, he had a capacity for hard and continuous work, such as is rarely met with.

An interesting episode of his middle age was a long correspondence with "Mr. Smith," who was really Dr. Secker, Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards primate. The letters are on various matters, doctrinal and practical, and seem to have been mutually edifying. They would now be called "heavy reading;" and having been printed but once, as a ponderous supplement to the Life of Wesley by Henry Moore, they are not now readily met with.

In 1747 there were indications of an altered tone on the part of some of the clergy. They had watched the movement, and they found all reason to approve of its results, especially in the lower ranks of society, where its influence was mainly shown. The convulsions and shoutings of the converts, which had marred the early stage of the movement, were now rarely met with. Wesley formed a friendship with the Rev. R. T. Bateman, the Rector of St. Bartholomew's, and was invited to preach in that church. One of the churchwardens was timorous, and thought it necessary to exercise his right of consulting the bishop, before admitting to the pulpit an unbeneficed and unlicensed clergyman. The bishop saw no reason to interfere: "Mr. Wesley was a regular clergyman, and under no ecclesiastical censure." So the question dropped, never to be revived, nor was inhibition ever issued in any diocese. This marks the beginning of a

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changed attitude on the part of the clergy, who had for some years given Wesley few invitations to preach in their churches. The results of some years of Methodist labours were now before reflective persons, and there was a visible improvement in the populace. A single page of Wesley's Journal of 1747—a year which seems to have been in some ways a turning-point—contains three significant entries.

A Captain H——, who had up to this time been strongly prejudiced against Wesley, now sent, requesting to see him. On the next day, at Moorfields, there was an improvement in the behaviour of the crowd, chiefly of the lowest kind of people, who gathered around the preacher. On the 12th of June, Wesley preached at St. Bartholomew's, where he remarked that "deep attention sat on every face."

The seed-time had been long and anxious, but the harvest now began to show itself.

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CHAPTER VIII.

A TIME OF PERSECUTION.

It is necessary, diverting the strict chronological order, to glance at some troubles which in the year 1743 beset the course of the Wesleys. Persecution has in all ages been a test of earnestness, and a benefit to the Christian Church. Purified by persecution, the Church of the first three centuries was enabled to set to all succeeding ages a bright example, the perfect following of which has rarely been attempted, and perhaps never with success. A persecuted Church has always found sympathizers, and the bystanders, touched in their hearts, in time have furnished new adherents.

Early in their career the Wesleys took note of Staffordshire, as containing some very neglected and godless districts. Even now portions of the "Black Country" have an indifferent repute. A century since, the state of things was worse; and at the frequent fairs and wakes there were scenes of disorder of the wildest kind. Bull-baiting was a common amusement, and cock-fighting brought together

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large and excited crowds. The moral condition of the working people may be imagined, and to amend it the Wesleys had made some efforts before May, 1743, when the riots broke out. At Wednesbury the seeds of trouble appear to have been sown by Williams, an injudicious adherent, who was said to have vilified the clergy, and to have thereby set the minds of the vicar and many of the inhabitants against the Methodists. Whatever the true explanation, when Charles Wesley arrived the storm broke over him and his friends. There was some organization amongst the enemy, for in several of the Staffordshire towns the mob resolved that there should be no more preaching. They threw volleys of stones, and they threatened with death or violence all who opposed their will. The windows and even the roofs of the preaching-houses were shattered; and many of the houses of the Methodists were entered and ransacked.

The accounts of these riots have been so fully given that the story need not be here repeated. While they lasted they were very dangerous to life and limb; yet it is clear that they would have been put an end to speedily but for the weakness of the magistrates. A few of these, perhaps, were willing that the riots should succeed in crushing out Methodism. Two of the clergy are said to have openly encouraged the rioters. When the news of the outbreak in Staffordshire reached John Wesley, with his usual courage he hastened to the spot. In vain he demanded for the insulted

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and outraged Methodists the protection of the law; the indolent and unworthy magistrates would do nothing. His escape from personal injury in these riots was so extraordinary as to appear to some miraculous. It may be partly, not altogether, accounted for by his gift of personal influence. A word, or even a look, from him had power to soften an enemy, and change him into a friend. The ringleader of the angry mob in Staffordshire thus changed his tone suddenly, swore to protect the man whom he had just been threatening, and rescued him from a position of actual danger. These Staffordshire disturbances lasted, though not with their first intensity, for some months. Describing the fiercer form of opposition, Wesley made it clear that to the denial of justice by its appointed guardians was to be set down these continued scandals. "We continued," he afterwards said, "to call sinners to repentance in London, Bristol, Bath, and a few other places; but it was not without violent opposition both from high and low, learned and unlearned." In 1744 some of the sufferers, while drawing up their narrative of the persecution, wrote in the spirit of early martyrs: "We are nothing terrified by our adversaries. God grant we may endure to the end!"

But such outrages were not limited to the Black Country, or even to Walsall and Birmingham, and the other towns on its confines. At St. Ives, in Cornwall, a mob rushed into the room where Charles Wesley was holding a service, threatened to murder

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him and his hearers, and actually beat and trampled on many of them. Mr. Hoblin, a neighbouring curate, had been heard to use abusive language, and the rioters felt encouraged. At last the mayor manfully declared that no man's malice should hinder him of his duty; and, in spite of the curate, he enrolled constables, and restored peace to the town. At Sheffield, where a mob was actually allowed to pull down the preaching-house, the magistrates, by reason of their gross neglect of duty, were, by legal process, compelled to make good the damage. This example had a good effect on the minds of other magistrates.

At Hull, in 1752, Wesley's lodgings were attacked by a mob, and volleys both of stones and of curses were showered in upon him through the broken windows, until midnight. At Manchester the mob was kept in check by the magistrates, who were more alive to their duties than their brethren had been at Sheffield. In Dublin opposition of the violent kind came to an end when several rioters were arrested and committed for trial. Though a conviction did not follow, peace was restored; and Wesley and his friends could again walk unmolested through the streets. So late as the year 1768, Wesley remarked that the roughs, or, as he termed them, "the beasts of the people," at Gloucester were only tamed by the magistrates, who were quite able, he said, to preserve quiet everywhere if they chose.

Persecution of the sharper kind was therefore stopped wherever the local authorities performed

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their duty. At Epworth the hostility of the curate has already been mentioned. At the same village John Wesley's preaching was once stopped by an invasion of drunken and noisy men, led by "a kind of gentleman," who stirred the courage of his followers by means of a French horn. At Halifax, in the year 1772, a man struck the venerable preacher in the face; but long before this time concerted opposition had everywhere come to an end, outrages being now casual and unfrequent. There were, however, milder forms of persecution which are noticed in the annals. Some one discovered that the press-gang, by means of which the king's regiments and ships of those days were manned, might be used to vex the lay preachers. Several of them were actually "impressed" and sent away to foreign service. In course of time, the injuries which the law had caused, or which the law failed to redress, came to an end; but the tribunals and the legislature were proverbially slow, and in the mean time a sense of unredressed hardship did much to alienate the Methodists from the National Church.

The intolerant spirit was shown in 1768, when six students, otherwise well behaved, were actually expelled from St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, for no other crime than sympathy with Methodism, and suspicion of being helped in their career by the good Countess of Huntingdon.[1]

There was another mode of annoyance, not amounting to persecution, which could not be

[1] Tyer. iii. 33.

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stopped by any appeal to higher authorities. Evidently it was injudicious, as well as unchristian and unkind, for any clergyman to drive away well-behaved and devout persons, who were willing to attend the services of the Church. But several such instances are on record. This was the case at Scarborough, where a "new vicar" preached against the Methodists;[1] and also at Epworth, where, in consequence of black looks and bitter words, the followers of Wesley declined any longer to enter the parish church. Of all men, he was ordinarily fertile in resources; but to this special exigency he was unequal. He could not bring his mind to force his followers into the parish church in such circumstances, while he would not sanction in them even the appearance of dissent. This was Wesley's chief, and perhaps his only, *crux;* nor could all his ingenuity find any way of escape.

[1] Journal, iv. 269.

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CHAPTER IX.

CHARLES WESLEY.

THE younger brother of the founder was five years his junior, having been born in the year 1708. He was educated at Westminster School, of which Samuel Wesley, the eldest of the family, was one of the under-masters. Charles proceeded in due time, with the aid of a studentship, to Christ Church, Oxford, the college to which John had been elected from Charterhouse.

While John was at Wroote, relieving their father of part of his parochical cares, Charles remained at Oxford; and he now became a prominent member of that "Sacramentarian Club" which has been described. Strictly, therefore, Charles was a Methodist at a date somewhat earlier than his more famous brother. In 1735 they embarked together for Georgia, Charles returning alone in the following year. Early in 1738 we find them both in London, lodging with a Mrs. Hutton, an old friend of the family and a person of discretion. When John,

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in his bitterness of spirit, denied that he was a Christian, she contradicted him very effectively.[1] Charles was at his brother's side, when the illumination and the new impulse came to both, in the early summer of that year. He shared fully in the inward and irresistible call to save their ignorant and depraved brethren in the Kingswood collieries and elsewhere. The brothers were not exactly alike in temperament. John was harder, more sinewy and enduring. Travelling in all weathers and over bad roads he did not dislike; and he was ever ready to address a large crowd at a market cross. Charles was equally laborious and equally zealous; but he preferred regular ministrations, and had a keener sense of ecclesiastical decorum. Hence in the course of a few years he settled down to stated duties in the chapels at London and Bristol. This was much in favour of John's design of inspecting the societies in all parts of the United Kingdom. He could leave home for several months together, in confidence that Charles would act the part of a faithful deputy.

John, as the elder, and as marked by more acuteness and vigour of mind, was the first to throw off the Moravian influence. He had occasion to give to his brother some strong and effectual warnings on these tendencies. He also deemed that Charles was for a time in some danger of falling into the "quiet" state, which he deemed an evil development of mysticism. As they grew old together,

[1] Tyer. i. 189.

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the parts were changed; for Charles had reasons for warning his brother against some tendencies of Methodism, and especially against secession from the Church. But this is anticipating.

In 1749 Charles was happily married to the daughter of Mr. Gwynne, a Welsh gentleman of good position, who encouraged Methodism, and who, as a lay upholder of the cause, had attended at least one Conference. Charles Wesley soon ceased to be itinerant; he resided for some years in Bristol, and finally in London. He aided his brother in the supreme direction of all the societies, and he conducted the services and administered the sacraments in some of the larger chapels. Perhaps he furthered the movement still more effectually by his sacred and devotional poetry.[1] It is impossible to estimate the influence of Charles Wesley's hymns in maintaining and spreading abroad Methodism. It would be as easy a task to measure the effects of the national songs and popular ballads on the life of the nation.

Shortly after his own well-omened marriage, Charles had reasons for fearing that his brother was in danger of forming an unsuitable alliance with Mrs. Grace Murray. He interfered in this delicate matter with such effect, that the lady was hastily married to another admirer, John Bennet, one of

[1] He wrote an enormous number of hymns and paraphrases, some printed, and some remaining in manuscript, until the whole were edited by the Rev. Dr. Osborn and published in many volumes. A small selection only appears in the Wesleyan Hymn Book.

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the preachers.[1] The disappointment was for the time keenly felt by the elder brother, and it was inevitable that a temporary coolness between them should ensue. Then they differed much in their estimate of the lay preachers. John defended them as a class, and on the whole thought very highly of them; while Charles held them in much lower estimation. In many of the preachers he observed a disposition to "pride of place" and an unreasonable ambition. He clearly foresaw that when obstacles which fretted them were removed, the preachers, or at least the larger number of them, would ignore the terms of their engagement, and lay claim to the full ministerial office.[2]

Such were points of difference between the two brothers, which must be taken into account by any student of their lives. Yet there was an enduring brotherly affection which differences of view could not lessen; nor is it too much to say that the brothers remained one in heart. They were one not only in the early days, but during the half century when, with a diversity of gifts but the same spirit, they sought to reanimate the Church, and quicken the religious life of the nation.

When the news came that some of the preachers at Norwich had taken on themselves, without show of authority, to administer the sacraments, Charles Wesley's sorrow and indignation were extreme. His

[1] "Narrative of a Transaction," etc., from manuscript in British Museum. J. R. Smith, 1862.

[2] Whitehead, i. 332, 339, 346; ii. 280.

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own choice would have been to dissolve the societies, break up the system—anything rather than that original Methodism should be dishonoured. He felt that the Methodists had been honoured instruments in reviving religion; but he knew well that no one system, built up by human hands, can ever be essential to its existence. The instruments may be changed, but the work proceeds. He hoped and prayed that in time the Bishops might see their way to reclaim and commission the preachers, and so bring the whole of Methodism within the pale of the Church. In 1752 he was on the point of leaving the Methodists, but was induced to remain by the fact of a more distinct declaration against secession from the Church. This appears clearly from a letter written by him in 1756, which also advised a more close union with the Church. It refers further to a projected interview with the primate, who appears to have been willing to confer with the Wesleys on this important matter. This project did not end as Charles Wesley desired; and he again wrote that he remained in the Methodist ranks in the hope of doing good, and of preventing evil (*i.e.* secession from the Church). Yet he knew that he was regarded on this very account with fear and dislike by many of the lay preachers.[1]

Happily there was a quieting down at the next Conference. There were renewed promises of fidelity to the Church, which must have been owing in no small degree to Charles Wesley's endeavours. Two

[1] Tyer. ii. 245–247.

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or three preachers "of a froward and unhumbled spirit" departed, to the relief of many hearts; while all who remained declared themselves willing to uphold original Methodism. John Wesley now promised to write an appeal to the societies, for the purpose of confirming them in Churchmanship. Charles, for his part, began a lecturing tour through the midland and northern counties. The special object he had in view in this tour was to warn the societies "against the wiles of Satan," "whereby he would draw them away from the Church and the other means of grace."

Before the year 1760 there were repeated discussions in the Conference, resulting at last in a clear understanding of the exact position and the limited powers of the lay preachers. For a whole quarter of a century after this there was peace in the land. No more threatenings of secession were heard, and the "expounders" were content with their own sphere of useful labour. The Wesleys were now made anxious, not by threats of secession, but by the wild language and erratic teaching of some of their followers on matters of doctrine.[1] Great must have been the special dangers which beset Methodism in the year 1763, when Charles Wesley wrote thus: "Sad havoc has Satan made of the flock. What they will do after my brother's departure I leave to the Lord, for I dare not think of it. I gave warning four years ago of the flood of enthusiasm which has now overflowed us, and

[1] Tyer. ii. 461.

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of the sect of ranters which should arise out of the witnesses" (of perfection). At this critical time Maxfield and Bell, who had become "ranters," left the connexion. John Wesley wrote to Lady Huntingdon, complaining of the defection "in the most trying times" of some of his ablest followers, as to whom he said, "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." At the same time Mr. Romaine wrote that the societies were in great confusion, and that brotherly love was lost in these disputes.[1]

In 1768 Charles removed to London, where his last twenty years of life were happily passed. After the new chapel was opened, he was chiefly responsible for the services there, aided by one or two junior clergymen. His home was in Chesterfield Street, not far from the parish church of St. Marylebone. The house was known to people of taste and culture—for his two sons were, even in their early days, eminent as musicians, and their drawing-room concerts became famous. Charles, the elder son, who was eminent as a composer and a teacher, died in 1834. Samuel, the younger son, also a composer, died a few years later, the father of a family renowned for musical talent.

The name of "the Poet of Methodism" was placed next in order to that of his brother, when a legal settlement was arrived at in 1784; and if he had survived he would have succeeded as president and supreme director. His latter years were

[1] Tyer. ii. 463.

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tranquilly spent, his chief anxiety arising from the disposition of younger brethren, like Dr. Coke, to drive the patriarch from his old position into one of more distinct separation from the Church. On all questions of episcopal authority and Church order Charles exhibited much firmness and consistency; but the time came when even his corrective influence failed, and when his soul was grieved by acts which he regarded as tantamount to secession.

The elaborate paper of 1745 will be remembered, which declared that full ministerial rights only appertained to such as received them in ordination from the successors in office of the Apostles. John Wesley is said to have retreated from this position. However this may have been, his brother adhered to it most firmly. If Charles could not demonstrate the exact succession of bishops, he accepted it as a probability that the rules of the Church catholic had been complied with. Apart from the law of episcopal succession, the brothers seem to have always been in accord as to the nature and the privileges of the Christian priesthood, the elder inclining, however, to the "supposition" that a presbyter was inferior to a bishop only in rank and degree.

Under a singular pressure of circumstances, John Wesley was led, in extreme old age, to carry this idea into practice. Charles Wesley was at Bristol when the "ordinations" for America took place; but he was only informed of them when it was too

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late. John Wesley's words were significant when he wrote to his brother, "Perhaps if you had kept close to me, I might have done better." Charles did not conceal his alarm, and he wrote to his brother in terms of the strongest disapproval.

The discussion was at its height just before the Conference of 1787. Charles Wesley now addressed the members of the society, and he used burning words. He had before warned them that wolves would enter and rend the flock—the self-created bishops and priests were the men; and he solemnly charged the people not to receive the Sacrament from unauthorized hands. The persons aimed at were Dr. Coke and some of the preachers, the latter being the only objects of the last injunction. Mr. Pawson, who was prominent amongst these, gave his own version of Charles Wesley's address to the London societies, and he spoke of that address as showing "cursed prejudice" and "furious bigotry."[1]

On this point, at least, there was little hope of agreement between the brothers, the youngest of whom was then on the verge of eighty years. Charles was in failing health, and he felt certain that his brother would be the survivor. "Keep your authority," he wrote to him, "while you live, and after your death let it pass to those most worthy of it. You cannot settle the succession."

On the 29th of March, 1788, Charles Wesley passed away, at the age of eighty. Just before his death he sent to the Rector of St. Marylebone, to whom

[1] Tyer. iii. 497.

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he said, "I have lived and I die in the communion of the Church of England, and I will be buried in the yard of my parish church." The cemetery attached to the new chapel in the City Road was unconsecrated, and of this he disapproved. His interment, therefore, took place at Marylebone, according to his directions, all the pall-bearers being clergymen. The City Road society showed that the slight on their little cemetery was resented by them, when they declined (contrary to Methodistic usage) to pay the funeral expenses of their regular minister.[1]

This true Christian poet and most estimable man was to a certain degree overshadowed through life by the fame of his brother, as in his early days by that of George Whitefield. At the outset he was hardly less remarkable as a preacher than either of them. One who heard him at Bristol has placed on record a description of one of his sermons, given without any notes, and of one hour's duration. His preaching was "with vehemence," and "with rich variety of expression."[2] There could hardly be higher praise than words which sum up the chief qualifications of a true orator. Some critics have described Charles Wesley as

[1] A special subscription was opened for this purpose.—Tyer. iii. 225.

[2] Tyer. i. 253. The early Methodist sermons presented few and simple ideas, each worked out completely, and viewed under a variety of aspects. This has been defined as the highest kind of preaching.—"Classic Preachers," 2nd series.

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being rather too narrow and rigid. It is therefore the more interesting to find in him all the marks of true catholicity of spirit. When he preached to miscellaneous audiences in Ireland, all his hearers were alike impressed, and all were willing to claim him as one of themselves. He had the power of stirring the soul of the Roman Catholics and of the Presbyterians alike. These facts will suffice to show that Charles Wesley had the higher endowments of the Christian preacher. Any modern hymnal or book of praise will testify to his rare excellence as a Christian poet.

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CHAPTER X.

OTHER CLERICAL HELPERS.

It would be an injustice to the memory of a great man to make no mention of the very active part taken by the Rev. George Whitefield in the movement. He shared with the Wesleys in the honours and toils of those early years, 1738–1741, when England began to be aroused from a kind of religious lethargy. Whitefield was actually the first to conceive and carry out the plan of preaching in the fields to the thousands who never entered the door of a church. The Calvinistic controversy soon separated these early friends, but there was mutual esteem to the last.[1] In 1769 Wesley noted his last conversation with his "old friend and fellow-labourer," who was then in failing health, and near to the close of an eventful life. Exactly forty years had passed away since they had been asso-

[1] There were minor differences also. Wesley was an earnest hater of slave-trading and of slavery, whereas Whitefield was the owner of slaves in America. They do not appear to have met often after the year 1742.

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ciated, in prayers and in charitable works, as members of the little society at Oxford. When Whitefield died, Wesley preached in memory of him more than one funeral sermon—the chief occasion being in the Tabernacle of Tottenham Court Road, before a vast congregation.

It would be difficult to ascertain how much of help, occasional or regular, the Wesleys received from the clergy. Their active life stretched over more than half a century, and they outlived all their early friends and associates; so that they may be said to have witnessed the rise and decay of two or three generations of cotemporaries. Some of their early associates—Whitefield was, of course, the most eminent of these—were separated from them by the unfortunate disputes on "the decrees." Wesley had many friends whom he saw in London or on his periodical tours, sometimes preaching, or assisting them, in their churches. But friendly incumbents whose good offices were limited to the occasional reception of the founder cannot be therefore reckoned amongst the Methodistic clergy. It is more to the purpose to look at those clergymen who were at the Conference, or otherwise closely identified with the movement.

Taking a central date in Wesley's career, such as the year 1764, there seems to have been at that time about forty of the clergy whose sympathies were avowedly with him. But many of his early coadjutors had already passed away; and the younger race of his clerical helpers, amongst whom Fletcher

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and Coke were the most prominent, had not then risen up.

Of the first race of clergymen who joined in the movement was the Rev. Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley (Kent). In 1742 he preached the visitation sermon of the deanery of Shoreham. It was what Wesley called a "thundering" discourse, and in its preparation he was himself suspected of having taken part. The Dean of Arches, who was present as Visitor, did not like the sermon, and he tried to shorten it; but the preacher, refusing to take the hint, brought it leisurely to an end, most of his official hearers having in the mean time withdrawn. Mr. Piers afterwards attended the first Methodist Conference; and shortly afterwards is found as companion of John Wesley at Oxford, when his last university sermon was preached at St. Mary's. Mr. Meriton, another of those who were at the first Conference, was from the Isle of Man. He and also Mr. Taylor, Vicar of Quinton, in the diocese of Gloucester, died in their prime. The fourth clergyman who assisted at the first Conference was Mr. Hodges, Rector of Wenvoe, in Wales, of whom little mention is afterwards made.

The next name met with in the annals, and a more important one, is that of the Rev. Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham (Kent). His career was long, and he was closely associated with the Wesleys, of whom he was the senior, and the chosen friend and counsellor in difficulties. Often did John Wesley retire to his friend's rural vicarage for

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quiet, and for friendly converse. That self-reliant man was little in the habit of asking advice from any; but when he did so, Perronet was more often the adviser. When Wesley, who had written in favour of a celibate life, and had recommended it to his preachers, altered his mind on this point, he consulted Perronet. The friendship between them was, in short, of the closest kind; and it was of unusual duration, for the "venerable saint," as Wesley styled him, lived to enter his ninety-second year. One of his sons became a preacher under Wesley's direction, but he did little honour to his name when he wrote and published a satire on the Church, containing humour of a low kind. His publication naturally excited the wrath of Charles Wesley. The skirmish, with a hundred other skirmishes occurring in the earlier Methodist history, may be found described in the industrious pages of Tyerman. Miss Briggs, the grand-daughter of Perronet, who had soothed his last days, afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Peard Dickenson, one of the clerical helpers of the Wesleys towards the close of their career. Mr. Dickenson's name is very frequently found in the annals. He continued to officiate at the New Chapel long after the founder's death; in truth, his legal right so to do was secured in the lifetime of Wesley. There he performed regular duty, and administered the sacraments, after the present century had opened, and within the memory of some who have but lately passed to their rest.

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More energetic and original in character was the Rev. William Grimshaw, formerly of Christ's, Cambridge. He early declared himself an adherent and imitator of Wesley, to whom he was some years junior. He was known in Yorkshire, not only in his own parish, but for many miles round, as a revivalist—the Body, or Aitken, of the north. When he heard of the irregular doings of the preachers at Norwich, he was, like Charles Wesley, indignant. He wrote to say that if such actions were allowed, he must in future disclaim all connection with Methodism. He showed much insight, of a kind which Wesley himself did not possess, when he said that in course of time the Methodists would become Dissenters—nor could he see any way of preventing it. His own vicarage was at Haworth, a secluded spot on the moors of West Yorkshire, since rendered famous as the home of the gifted Brontë family. Grimshaw's premature death in 1762 was a severe blow to Yorkshire Methodism; and the important place which he held in Wesley's estimation is shown by the longest biographical notice of all those which are found in the printed Journals.

Better known to modern readers is the name of the Rev. John W. Fletcher, of Madeley, who has been called the saint of Methodism. Southey has described the character, the labours, and the last days of this excellent man in a chapter which rises to the level of the subject. Fletcher was a native of Northern Switzerland, early in life naturalized in

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England. His remarkable merits led to his selection as the principal of Lady Huntingdon's College of Trevecca, in the days before the Calvinistic controversy had become fast and furious. Then he retired into the comparative seclusion of his country cure; but he had become known to Wesley, and to many others, as a man of rare devoutness and singleness of mind. Beyond this, he had a reputation for scholarship, and for unusual power of the logical and dialectic kind. In July, 1764, Wesley visited Madeley—"an exceeding pleasant village, encompassed with trees and hills." The vicar he described as one wholly bent on the Christian life. The church on Sunday was quite inadequate to hold the congregation who thronged to hear the distinguished visitant. Fletcher's reverence for Wesley was that of a loving and obedient disciple; and, although not fond of controversy, he was induced to enter the lists as the champion of those Arminian views which were held with enthusiasm by Wesley and all his followers. Fletcher, whose own choice would have been a life of holiness in retirement, showed much chivalrous and self-denying love for Wesley, when he entered into the warfare with the upholders of "the decrees." It is simply impossible now to understand the bitterness of this protracted controversy. The language used by the disputants was of a kind never in these days employed. The *Gospel Magazine*, for instance, asked whether it was not awful that the twenty-nine thousand souls then in Wesley's

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societies should be seduced from Protestant doctrine? Lady Huntingdon, a person of some culture and much piety, said that the Wesleys ought to be regarded as papists. Her friend and adviser, the Rev. Mr. Shirley, proposed an opposition or Calvinistic Conference, for the purpose of counteracting their "dreadful heresies." Fletcher, in spite of his gentle and devout habits of life, entered into the thickest of the fray. He issued from the press essay after essay, said by those who are conversant with them to be extremely able vindications of the doctrine of Free Grace. His chief antagonists were the excellent Toplady, Mr. Shirley, and two young brothers, one of whom was to become famous as Rowland Hill.

Wesley took delight in the society of Fletcher, a man of rare excellence, in whose life and character there was no visible flaw. In 1774 they "took sweet counsel together" at Wolverhampton. Like most of the chief favourites of Heaven, Fletcher was of delicate frame, and he was long supposed to be very near to the grave and gate of death. For a time he regained strength—"in answer to many prayers," as Wesley said, in the belief that Providence designed his friend for some special work. None was so fitted, he said, to cope in argument with Dr. Priestley, whom Wesley regarded as an arch-heretic of the time. About the year 1776, Wesley, who was seventy-three years of age, and who had the highest possible opinion of the talents and virtues of Fletcher, looked on him as of all

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men most fitted to be his successor. The position of director-general of all the growing societies was one which an ambitious man might have coveted. But Fletcher had no aspirations of this kind, nor was his health assured: and he did not consent to be so designated. He longed for quiet, and he sought it, not in vain, amongst his native Jura Mountains. On his return to his Shropshire vicarage, he married Miss Bosanquet, one of most eminent Methodists of her sex; but the revival of his strength was not to be of long continuance. On the 6th of November, 1785, Wesley had lost the follower and friend whom he at that time most regarded; and himself preached the funeral sermon of one whom he described as "a great and good man."

Frequent mention is also made in the annals of the Rev. John Berridge (formerly of Clare, Cambridge), who, in 1749, was the Curate of Stapleford, and a close friend of the Wesleys. Some years later, he became Vicar of Everton. He was studious, and marked by much originality of mind. His labours were "grandly negligent" of parochial limits, for they extended to all the country round. He was of Calvinistic tendencies, and once a year he came to London as a special preacher in Whitefield's Tabernacle. His friend and neighbour, Mr. Hicks, Incumbent of Wrestlingworth, like himself, was a "revivalist;" and their exciting services caused a renewal of those curious physical symptoms which came over hearers in the days of the first Methodist

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sermons.[1] Wesley again refused to condemn the "strange scenes," when, after long cessation, they were again found at revivalist services. He thought that Providence might, for some undiscovered reason, have ordained that such results should sometimes follow evangelistic teachings. Mr. Berridge was unconventional and even eccentric, but of transparent sincerity; and he continued to help on the Methodist cause until, at a good old age, he passed away.

The Rev. Henry Venn, of Huddersfield, also entered into the spirit of the movement, though more careful than was Berridge of Church order. In 1761 he found that some of Wesley's preachers, stationed in his own town, were drawing the minds of good people away from the Church. He made a strong representation of this to Wesley, who tried to smooth matters over. It was agreed that the preachers should be allowed to invade Mr. Venn's parish only once a month. The compact was duly observed for a short time. Further complaints drew forth from Wesley a long and characteristic letter; but it does not seem that the matter was ever arranged to Mr. Venn's satisfaction. It is curious that in this letter Wesley already described himself as a worn-out soldier, little knowing that a full quarter of a century of hard work was still in front of him. The name of Venn afterwards became one of high repute in the annals of the English Church.

There is a slight obscurity as to the Rev. John

[1] Southey, ii. 143–154.

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Richardson, who resigned a curacy in Sussex in order that he might assist the Wesleys in their work in London. Tyerman, usually full of detail, does not give the name of the clergyman who read the funeral service at John Wesley's tomb in 1791. Other historians say that it was Mr. Richardson, who had long been one of Wesley's curates at the New Chapel, who for many years "served him as a son in the Gospel," and who, dying shortly afterwards, was buried in the same tomb.[1]

The Rev. David Simpson gave important aid to the Methodist cause, not in London, but in his own town of Macclesfield. At St. John's, Cambridge, he had become intimate with Rowland Hill, and with some others who gave their thoughts to religion. At first he served as the Curate of Macclesfield; but there were those who spoke of him, doubtless in error, as holding unsound doctrine. His explanations satisfied the Bishop of Chester; but a different position had to be found for him; and a new church was speedily built in the same town, in which he officiated until his death in 1799. His reception was always of the heartiest kind; and it is not surprising to find that Wesley was glad to halt at Macclesfield on his long north-country tours. On such occasions the communicants were found to number from seven to twelve hundred. Sunday schools are said to have been established in con-

[1] The doubt is caused by the mention of a Mr. Richardson who succeeded Grimshaw at Haworth—perhaps another clergyman of the name.

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nection with his church by this excellent man so early as the year 1778.[1]

Beyond the circle of those who were openly identified with Wesley and the movements, there were many other friends and correspondents, of whom no mention can here be made. Some of them, like Whitefield, the popular preacher, and Law, the thoughtful mystic, were critical rather than approving. The Rev. James Hervey was an early member of the Oxford society—a man of distinct literary power. He looked on, but he had some misgivings which prevented him from joining the Wesleys in their great undertaking. Ingham, the kindly companion of their early days, who had been with them in their Georgia mission, and had afterwards joined in the exploration of Herrnhut—even this most faithful of early friends did not actively aid them in the later years. He did, however, send to John Wesley letters full of friendly counsel, which show the earnest and generous disposition of the man. How little did the retiring Ingham dream of a coming day when his name, as that of Wesley's frequent companion, would be familiar to several millions of English-speaking Christians!

Appreciative of its founder, yet critical as regards Methodism.

This description will also apply to the Rev. Wm. Baddiley, of Hayfield, in Derbyshire. He, like the Wesleys, was entitled to be called an innovator and a revivalist. He, like them, had formed religious

[1] Tyer. iii. 370, 501.

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guilds, and he had enlisted the aid of lay helpers, a full century before the time when such things were commonly heard of in the Church and came to be regarded as permissible.[1] His sympathy was rather with Charles, as the more consistent Churchman. Like him, he censured such Levites as were too ready to encroach on the office of the priesthood. The quaintness of an appeal which he made to the elder brother entitles it to special mention.

He entreated John not to fall off in his affection for that mother who, notwithstanding his irregularities, had dandled him on her knees; and he doubted whether the Methodists, if they left the Church and became Dissenters, would not split up into "subdivisions, like the Anabaptists in Germany."

Several of Wesley's itinerant helpers took exactly the course which might be expected, and which not a few of their successors now are found to take. They had received valuable teaching, and more valuable experience: and they desired to be more publicly useful. They felt that within the pale of the National Church they might labour with equal success, and even with larger openings for useful exertion. The transition to the regular army will always be easy to any well-trained volunteer. But before looking at the career of John Jones, the type of a preacher who entered the ranks of the clergy, it is necessary to mention Thomas Maxfield. He was a valuable assistant to Wesley at the Foundry, at first in a capacity analogous to that of a Scripture-

[1] Tyer. ii. 205, 211.

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reader; and he became in a singular way the first recognized lay preacher, after Methodism had found a local habitation and a name. The tradition is that during Wesley's absence no regular minister could be found for a stated service, and that, rather than disappoint the people, Maxfield himself entered the pulpit and preached to them. Hearing of this and returning home at once, Wesley felt as any clergyman would now feel, if he heard of a like assumption on the part of his Scripture-reader. The venerable Susanna Wesley, who resided at the Foundry and had listened to Maxfield, now interposed: she advised her son to consider the matter more carefully, and to hear the expounder. He did so, and after much consideration he deemed it right to allow Maxfield to preach.[1] Yet he always maintained that lay preaching did not come by design —it was only permitted at an emergency. Maxfield was a man of no ordinary powers; and Lady Huntingdon had a very high opinion of him, and would have been glad to take him away from the Foundry. There, however, he remained for many years, aiding the Wesleys effectively, yet unable to render aid of the kind most needed by them; for the clerical staff was in no proportion to the number of the communicants in their London chapels. Dr. Barnard, the friendly Bishop of Derry, at length offered to ordain Maxfield, in order, as he said, that Wesley "might not work himself to death." In 1762 Maxfield showed a tendency to

[1] Southey, i. 252.

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drift into doctrinal error, not alone, but in company with Bell, a preacher, who had been a corporal in the Guards, and with several members of the London Society. Wesley, who had a genuine regard for Maxfield, now addressed to him a long letter, kindly expressed, yet conveying censure. He made similar attempts in the case of the other "honest enthusiasts," who were fast becoming ranters. All these efforts were in vain; and the first secession of importance now took place, for Maxfield and Bell were followed by two hundred of the Methodists, who opened for themselves a new chapel in Little Moorfields. This was a painful event; but Wesley bore it meekly, remarking that a falling off in the contributions at the Foundry was "the fruit of Bell's enthusiasm and Thomas Maxfield's gratitude.[1]"

Wesley's former curate is afterwards found taking an active part at a meeting at Lady Huntingdon's, although he does not seem to have joined her community. In 1772 he intimated a wish to return to his old position at the Foundry, and there was some renewal of intercourse; but he was destined never again to serve under his old chief, and as the minister of a very small Independent cause he ended his days.

After losing the valuable aid of the man who will in history be regarded as the first "Methodist preacher," Wesley was again in a difficulty. John Jones, an experienced lay preacher, was highly qualified for Holy Orders, but no bishop was found

[1] Tyer. ii. 434 556.

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to confer them. About this time there arrived in London Erasmus, Bishop of Arcadia, in Crete; and the idea was suggested that if English orders could not be obtained, Greek orders were valid and sufficient. Inquiries were duly made, and replies came from Smyrna showing that Erasmus was all that he professed to be. After this, and with Wesley's full approval, John Jones was ordained by the Greek bishop. This episode alone proved that Wesley was not quite convinced of the validity of Presbyterian orders; for if Peter King's "supposition" was correct, Wesley might as well have acted on it. On such a theory as is ascribed to him he had no occasion to send John Jones for ordination to an unknown ecclesiastic from the far East. Toplady and the other hostile critics of Wesley's proceedings did not fail to seize on this incident. They called Bishop Erasmus a foreign mendicant and an impostor; and they even circulated a story that Wesley had offered money in hope of obtaining the episcopal succession from Erasmus, but that the latter had declined to give it on the ground that three bishops are required for a regular consecration. This was of course a fiction.

The ordination of John Jones was but a temporary expedient. It was not satisfactory to the mind of Charles Wesley, who hoped that the best of the preachers might receive, not Greek, but English orders. Nor was it satisfactory to Mr. Jones himself, for he shortly afterwards applied to the Bishop of London, was reordained according to

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the English rite, and accepted the living of Harwich. Years afterwards, Wesley, while suffering from a fever, received a letter full of kind solicitude from Mr. Jones; and this is the last mention of him in the Methodistic annals.

Another of Wesley's preachers who at the same time received orders from the Cretan bishop was Lawrence Coughlan. He also was reordained, and at once he went to Newfoundland, under the auspices of the S.P.G. He was active as a missionary, and he wrote letters to Wesley full of words of affection for his former chief. Returning to London, he was struck with sudden and dangerous illness while conversing with Wesley, and his death occurred soon afterwards. The name of the Rev. James Creighton appears frequently in the later annals, as one of the clergymen attached to the New Chapel. He and the Rev. Peard Dickenson had certain legal rights secured to them, which placed them, so long as they lived, in a position of independence, and of superiority with regard to all unordained preachers; and they continued to officiate long after Wesley's death. The Rev. E. Smyth, who had been a popular preacher at the chapel-of-ease known as Bethesda, in Dublin, for many years, took permanent charge of Wesley's chapel at Bath in the old age of the founder. Mr. Smyth was regarded with jealousy by some of the preachers, who refused to admit the superior claims of the ordained clergy. Passing by many incidents and many other names, we close this

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chapter with a brief notice of Wesley's most energetic and most trusted clerical helper in his latest years—the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.

Dr. Coke was a Welshman, and had been a fellow-commoner of Jesus, Oxford. He was a man of independent fortune, and of unusual activity, mental and bodily. He was small in person, with a shrill voice, and a temper sharp, impetuous, and often obstinate. Wesley, who was sometimes blind to the failings of those whom he loved, did not perceive that Coke's judgment was by no means equal to his zeal, and that he was more ready to raise strife and difficulty than to allay them.[1]

The bond of union between the aged founder and his trusty lieutenant of the later days, although quickly formed, was very close. A single conversation between them in 1776 led to the resignation of his curacy by Coke, and to his placing his services wholly at the disposal of Wesley. He rapidly gained influence over the aged man; and this he did not always exercise in the way approved of by Charles Wesley, who saw reason to regard Coke as rash, interfering, and bent on self-aggrandizement. There is reason to conclude that such grave errors as the "ordinations for America," and the mutilation of the Prayer-Book and Psalter —that is to say, the most serious errors which can be charged against the venerable Wesley—were really owing to Coke's influence.

From these criticisms, suggested by passages of

[1] Tyer. iii. *passim.*

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history now for the first time elucidated in the industrious volumes of Tyerman, it is pleasant to turn to the brighter side of Dr. Coke's character and career. His name appears at the head of the first subscription list for Methodist mission purposes. With all the ardour of his character he entered into the cause of foreign missions; and often did he cross the Atlantic as their organizer and chief manager. When his venerable friend arrived at the end of his labours, Dr. Coke happened to be away on one of these journeys. For many years afterwards he directed with great success the missionary work of the Methodist body; and in the year 1814 he died on mid-ocean, and was buried under the waves which he had so often traversed. A memorial tablet, which sets forth his merits and his labours, is found in the New Chapel, close to the monuments of the Wesleys.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE LAY PREACHERS.

THERE will never be, even amongst thoughtful men, complete agreement as to Methodism. Some will hold that it was far more than excused by the benefits which it conferred on the world—benefits so great as to more than compensate for the greatest schism which has marked the annals of the English Church. Others will hold that many of these benefits might have been secured without any schism, and that all of them have been purchased at a very high price. From whatever point of view regarded, Methodism may truly be said to owe its character, and its very existence as a permanent system, to the organized body of the lay preachers. It will be remembered that this important feature of the system was not designed—it might even be described as accidental. There was at a certain date a scarcity of ordained clergymen, and some zealous lay expounders came forward to fill the gap. Lay preaching, therefore, was not invented—it was only permitted by Wesley, or forced on him by

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circumstances. He knew that there were many precedents for it, since as well as before the Reformation; and that the idea of preaching as of a duty solely appertaining to the priestly office, is quite a modern one. In those primitive days which he loved to study, selected and approved laymen were accustomed to preach in the Church, and even in the presence of the clergy.[1] Hence the step hastily taken on his own responsibility by Thomas Maxfield was, after much thought, sanctioned by the superior; and year by year the number of the expounders increased, until at Wesley's death there were about five hundred of the itinerant order alone. If these had not been at hand to carry on the work, it must then have dropped through; for the clerical adherents were few in number at any one time, and they alone could not have ministered to the societies, much less could they have ensured the continuity of the system. When the half-dozen clergymen who acted as assistants to the Wesleys came to the end of their work, there would have been no succession of ministers to carry it on; and Methodism, though it might leaven the Church, would certainly, as a distinct system, have come to an end. Therefore, the organization of the band of preachers was the fact which has given permanence to Methodism.

It is, however, curious to find them always spoken of by Wesley as no more than extraordinary messengers, raised up to excite the ordinary ministers

[1] Bingham, "Antiquities," Book xiv. cap. iv.

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to diligence, and to carry the good news to those who were out of hearing, and not to be reached by regular ministrations. On one occasion Wesley drew a parallel between the unordained preacher and a female teacher. Both were abnormal, and only to be made use of at a time of emergency.[1] Their function, though highly useful, was inferior to that of the ordained clergy. The preacher's commission was, so far as may be gathered from Wesley's own words, not unlike the commission now given by many bishops of the English Church to lay readers.

All this was perfectly clear to Wesley's own mind; but it may be doubted whether it was equally clear to the minds of those whom he employed. Charles Wesley was apt to take a somewhat harsh view of the efforts from time to time made by the preachers to assert their claims and improve their position in the system. They were, he thought, warped by ambition—by the desire of becoming more important. They were apt to accuse him, in return, of pride and bigotry; and, in short, there was little cordiality between them at any time, while occasionally there was an open opposition. John Wesley resolutely and calmly kept the peace, and held the balance between the contending influences, yet he maintained his own position with singular steadiness of will.

The lay preacher usually entered the ranks at the age of twenty or rather more, and not without a careful examination of his spiritual state and his

[1] Tyer. iii. 112.

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mental faculties. He had opportunities for improvement, of which, indeed, he stood in need, for, as a rule, his early education had been of the simplest kind. Wesley helped them in this so far as lay in his power, and when he met with them, which could not be often in the year. He advised every young preacher to form his style by a study of St. John's first epistle, as the model of "sublimity and simplicity." There was no theological school or training college for Methodists in those days, and most of the preachers had to acquire such learning as they did acquire with little or no assistance from others. Still many of these self-taught men became very fair scholars; and the whole of them, as a class, are believed to have been, on an average, fully equal to the candidates who then presented themselves for orders in the Church.

The work on which the preachers entered was laborious, especially in the early years, when the circuits were very extensive. The discipline was also strict. In these particulars there has been a great change in the course of a century. The preacher of Wesley's time was expected to be in the preaching-house at five o'clock a.m. There were places far apart to be visited by him in all weathers; and there were a multitude of other regular duties requiring constant attention, and no small physical endurance. No preacher was suffered to remain more than a year, or at the most two years, in one locality. In the large towns several preachers were stationed; in the rural circuits, two only. The

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seniors amongst them met Wesley at the Conference once a year, for deliberation and prayer, the comparison of notes, and the rearrangement of stations.

His own ascetic system he, to some extent, imposed on all his preachers. They received advice, amounting to command, as to their hours of rising and of retiring, their diet, and habits of life generally. In the early years, celibacy was their rule; nor was the stipend sufficient for the maintenance in the most frugal manner of even one person. Some of them eked out a scanty livelihood by retailing medicines and other small wares; but this was talked about, and finally was prohibited. The only kind of traffic thenceforward open to them was the sale of the numerous books and tracts, on which a commission was allowed them by the Methodist publishing office in London. As the number and wealth of adherents increased, the position of the preachers improved. They were allowed to marry, and a special school was provided, free of expense to them, for the education of their sons. But the hardships endured by the early race must have been extreme. The preachers had long distances to traverse in all weathers. One of them, John Jane by name, brought on a fever by overwalking, and of this he died "without a struggle, a smile on his face." The catalogue of his personal effects, which does not mention any books, was so scanty that, after sale of them and payment of his funeral expenses, there was a surplus of no more than sixteen-pence left for his representatives. John

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Wesley was not by nature harsh or unkind, but he was *doctrinaire;* and this sum was, he said, "enough for any unmarried preacher of the Gospel to leave."

The Kingswood School, at which the sons of the preachers were educated, has been already mentioned. It was from its foundation an object of solicitude and frequently of trouble also.[1] All the details were arranged by Wesley himself with great care. He drew up, and from time to time revised, the plan of study, and the lists of the class-books. In the rules for the management of this school (which was perhaps his favourite institution) is observable the same hardness of theory which prompted his curious comment on the residuary property of poor John Jane. He did not find the accumulation of wealth to be with him an object of desire; nor did he stand in need of relaxation or mere amusement. Hastily forming the conclusion that human beings are constituted after one pattern, he too freely applied to others all rules which he found convenient and applicable to himself. And at Kingswood it was ordained that there were to be no hours of play. Such ideas, not of harshness or unkindness, but of utilitarian and ascetic severity, have given excuse to those who, like Southey, have compared Wesley with the founders of the great monastic orders.

The important line of demarcation drawn before the year 1760 between the "itinerant" and the "local" preachers remains to the present day. The former

[1] Journal, ii. 287; iii. 419.

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gave up all secular pursuits, and devoted themselves wholly to evangelistic work, being maintained by a small fixed stipend out of the contributions of the societies amongst whom they laboured. Wesley designed them as a permanent diaconate (to use a modern phrase), and on their aid he was compelled to rely, because of the extreme difficulty which he at all times found in gaining an ample supply of clerical helpers. More than once he sent circulars to a number of clergymen, but the responses were few and discouraging. They were many of them friendly and sympathetic, and they asked him to preach in their churches; but only now and then could a clergyman be found, like Fletcher or Grimshaw, to join the order of which Wesley was the director. Therefore the preachers, who increased in number every year, became more indispensable as coadjutors to Wesley, and more esteemed by the societies.

In 1784 Wesley, in naming one hundred persons for the first legal Conference, selected ninety-six of his preachers: and if this had been by seniority only no offence would have arisen. But Mr. Hampson and a few others of long standing were passed over; and they naturally took umbrage and resigned. Hampson became a Dissenting minister; and his son, also leaving the ranks of the itinerancy, became a clergyman, and settled at Sunderland.[1] Now and

[1] It has often been said that Mr. Hampson, junior, nourished a resentment on this score, which tinged his "Life of Wesley," published in 1791. But there was no permanent ill feeling between them.—Journal, May, 1788.

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again other preachers, like Skelton and Bennet, grew tired of the work, and became Dissenting ministers, or returned to secular pursuits; but, on the whole, the secessions appear to have been few, for Wesley had the power of firmly attaching his followers to himself and to the service.

Thomas Walsh, whose name appears frequently in the annals, was a man after Wesley's own heart. Early in life he worked in Ireland with extraordinary zeal and success; and while undergoing daily labours more than sufficient to occupy all his time and tax all his powers, he contrived to teach himself Greek and Hebrew. Brought over to England as a chosen helper, by one who had the gift of discerning character, his efforts saw no falling off. They were, in short, too great, and Walsh died of consumption at the age of twenty-eight, to the great sorrow of Wesley, who could only write in his Journal, "Surely Thy judgments are a great deep."

As the century drew towards its close, the conditions of the service became easier, and the social position of the itinerants much improved. Their incomes, indeed, remained on a very low scale, but extra allowances and advantages were provided for wives and children. Young men now entered the service who had been fairly educated, and who were very different to Haime and Staniforth and Nelson, the converted soldiers and colliers of the first days. The rough, impetuous, untaught evangelists of the early generation made room in time for a more cultivated class of preachers.

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Thirty years since, there were still living a few venerable men, who in their early youth had been selected and commissioned by Wesley himself. It was easy to discover, by talking to these survivors of the old army of eighteenth-century Methodism, the qualities which their chief most valued in his subordinates. Beyond a moderate but sufficient amount of learning, partly self-acquired, they possessed extraordinary common sense, energy, nerve, stability of character, and general aptitude for work. They cared little for abstract questions of Church government, and avoided theological controversies. Their range of teaching was narrow, but it embraced all that is of highest moment; and their distinguishing notes were simplicity, zeal, and straightforwardness. Such were men whom Wesley in his later years enrolled as evangelists and expounders; and thus he exemplified the maxim, yet unwritten, of the first Napoleon, that genius consists in knowing how to make the best use of the materials at hand.

Of the "local" preachers, or those whose services are gratuitous, little need be added, though they have been factors of moment in the work of Methodism. They have always remained at their homes and occupations, and they are chiefly relied on for preaching at the smaller places, or on the week-day evenings. They have never been drawn from any one class exclusively; and there were, nearly a century since, such distinguished "locals" as Dr. Hamilton, who preached the sermon before the Con-

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ference at Leeds in July, 1789,[1] and Dr. Whitehead, who preached Wesley's funeral sermon in 1791. Similarly, there are now amongst them some who are well known in their professions and in public life. The line as regards ministerial duty and privilege is now very sharply drawn; and the "local," although allowed to preach, is for all intents and purposes regarded as a layman.

This sketch of Methodism will provoke the criticism that "preaching" seems to have been the beginning and the end—little mention having been made of the other means of grace. It is certainly true that those of the last century, who were so highly honoured as instruments in reviving true religion, attributed very much to preaching. They did not undervalue those two sacraments which Wesley was wont to describe as "converting ordinances;" yet they felt that if Christianity is to spread, and English heathenism to be subdued, it must be chiefly by means of sermons. Like the Baptist, they came preaching and saying, "Repent." Hence the art of *extempore* address has always been cultivated with care and success by Wesley's followers; and if ever the happy day of reunion should come, the Methodists would naturally fall into their place, in the Church of the nation, as a Home Missionary and a Preaching Order.

[1] In this discourse Dr. Hamilton set forth to the assembled preachers one of Wesley's favourite ideas—that of a special class of laymen commissioned to teach and preach, but who "had nothing to do with the priesthood."—Tyer. iii. 585.

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CHAPTER XII.

WESLEY IN IRELAND.

THE founder of Methodism was by nature a good traveller, not easily fatigued, equable in temper, bent on completing his journey in the face of all obstacles. Intercourse with Ireland was in the last century immeasurably more difficult than now. On land the roads and the carriages were but indifferent, while on the sea the delays and perils were such as to be hardly intelligible to readers in our day. The traffic across the Channel was carried on only by means of very small sailing packets, which took a day and a night, or even more, to perform a voyage now effected in four hours. To sail from Holyhead to the landing-place near Dublin in twelve hours was to have an expeditious passage in those days. Wesley first visited Ireland in 1747; and thenceforward, to the end of his life, he repeated his visit in alternate years with much regularity.

It is worthy of note that he was gladly received, not merely by the common people, but by numbers of superior station. Many of the clergy and gentry

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came forward to welcome him, at a time when but few of their own class in England had overcome early prejudices. On the very day of his first arriving in Dublin, he was asked to officiate in the parish church of St. Mary. There he addressed a congregation which he described as "gay and senseless"—a phrase which means little more than that they were well dressed, and did not listen with deep attention. The leaders of the religious revival were in the habit of speaking to audiences of another kind, capable of being more easily impressed. Wesley's reputation had gone before him to Ireland, and in Dublin he found a small society was already formed, which met at a house in Marlborough Street. A representation had been made, it seems, by some very cautious clergyman or churchwarden, to the archbishop, who did not approve of lay preaching, and probably expressed a wish to know more about the movement. Wesley had an interview with this prelate at once; but of their meeting, unfortunately, no particulars are on record. Wesley "visited the classes" as usual on these Irish tours; and, after a hasty survey, made remarks in his Journal on the city and its inhabitants; but he did not now prolong the journey. On the subsequent visits to Ireland, his stay was of much longer duration, embracing visits to many of the chief towns.

It will suffice to say that his impressions of the people were favourable—he found them teachable, courteous, and hospitable. In spite of the "penal

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laws," the social relations of Protestants with Roman Catholics were of a more agreeable kind than they afterwards became, or than they are at the present time. The former used their privileges with much forbearance; while the latter felt that the harsh enactments had been made in times of panic, rather to frighten than to oppress them. The Roman Catholic priesthood then contained men of a mild and tolerant type, educated in France, and possessing an amount of culture which Maynooth has failed to impart. Under the charge of such pastors, the common people were not as hostile to the race and religion of "the Saxon" as they have since become; and when the Wesleys preached in the open air, many Roman Catholics were found to listen to them.

The era of persecution through which Methodism passed in Ireland was short, and it was almost confined to one locality—Cork. Here was, in the year 1749, the memorable "presentment" by the grand jury, finding that Charles Wesley and some of his friends were persons of ill fame and vagabonds. John Wesley's Journals are nowhere more minute and graphic than when descriptive of Irish scenes and persons; nor can a correct impression of the Ireland of a century since be more readily obtained than through their pages.

In Ireland Wesley found some of the most energetic and most cultivated of his followers. High in renown amongst the preachers was Thomas Walsh in the earlier, and Adam Clarke in the later

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annals. The former was a man of intense zeal and force of character—a man after Wesley's own heart. It was remarked that after Walsh had left Dublin, to work under the founder's eye, as one of his most trusted lieutenants in England, the good people whom he left behind him heard little or nothing more about self-denial. Wesley's keenness of observation led him at once to the discovery that rigorous discipline is necessary to correct the "slackness" of the Irish character. He saw that the people who had received him with so much geniality and heartiness of welcome were "unstable as water;" and he conveyed to them more than a hint when he explained to an Irish audience, in a sermon, the character of Reuben.[1]

Ecclesiastical Ireland was not then exactly as now. The clergy were not overworked, while they were for the most part well endowed. On the whole, they showed too little of dissatisfaction with their position as the teachers of but a small minority of the people. The prelates of the Church were courteous and amiable; but they were in the habit of making long visits to England, and therefore of shutting up and forsaking their large and lonely mansions in the dioceses. Wesley's intercourse with several of them with whom he came in contact was pleasant on either side; and with Dr. Barnard, the Bishop of Derry, he contracted a friendship of no ordinary kind.

Passing by the narratives of many of his tours in

[1] Journal, ii. 416.

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Ireland, and coming down to the year 1783, we find Wesley at an advanced age, yet famous as a preacher and "a wonder to many."[1] He did not omit to meet his own people in the City Road as Sunday came round: yet he could find time and strength to preach at "St. Thomas's in the afternoon, and at St. Swithin's in the evening." His own health in the March of the year was hardly as vigorous as before. Probably east winds were felt by him as they had not been of old, and hence his complaints of weakness and a "tearing cough," not unaccompanied by some feverish symptoms. Still nothing should divert him from his long journey to Ireland; and, according to custom, he traversed the midland counties, and crossed over the Channel from Holyhead. On landing at Dunleary (where the harbour of Kingstown now stands) no carriage could be found, and, incredible as it seems, the aged man walked on to Dublin. There he spent many quiet days amongst his friends and followers. During his sojourn there was an ordination at St. Patrick's. He noted in his Journal that the archbishop's demeanour at this solemn service was impressive; yet he also noted the vacant unconcern on the faces of some of the young men who were admitted into the sacred ministry.

Two years later, Wesley is again found on the accustomed voyage from Holyhead to Ireland—a favourable one this time, as it occupied but twelve hours. It would have been far otherwise, but that

[1] Coke and Moore.

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the wished-for breeze sprang up at the right moment, "in answer to prayer." This is but one of many illustrations of his firm belief in the ever-present and interposing hand of Providence. On this visit to Ireland the patriarch found the number of his societies much increased; and when, according to rule and custom, his Dublin followers assembled at St. Patrick's, the number of the communicants was extraordinary. This was the wish of his heart —that the growth of Methodism should be accompanied and attested by a large gathering "at church and Sacrament."

It is not strange that at so advanced an age Wesley should feel the isolation of one whose friends had already passed away. Day by day he heard of some fresh gap in the circle. At Limerick those for whom he inquired were removed to "Abraham's bosom." At the cathedral of that city the services of the Sunday morning lasted for four hours, and would have lasted somewhat longer, but that Wesley, at the request of the clergy, assisted them in the administration. There is no mention by him of fatigue after this service of four hours' duration. On the contrary, the aged man was ready to preach on the very same evening, in an open space; but some obstructives of the period showed themselves, and he and his people thought it better to retire into their "own house"—for "chapel" he never called it. Some days later, and by Whitsuntide, he had arrived at Castlebar, in Mayo. His chosen text on Whit-Sunday was the Heavenly

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Witnesses; nor is any word of doubt found as to the authenticity of the passage. In the evening two clergymen of the neighbourhood joined with him in an administration to the members of his society.

The belief in the supernatural was with Wesley an active living principle. How often he drew the line, refusing credence beyond a certain point, is not easy of discovery. During this tour in the north-west of Ireland, a good woman, to him unknown, came and declared to him that four years previously she had been restored to health by his touch. Doubtless he had no recollection of the incident; nor is there the least ground for supposing that he had ever "touched" any person with any such intent. Still he simply records the fact that this woman came to him gratefully with her story of former relief. Was it a genuine cure? and if so, was the right cause assigned? On points such as these little light is thrown by Wesley's own simple narrative. In such cases—and they are frequent—he gives the facts, leaving the reader to take his own view of them. He may be called credulous: and he rarely said or wrote anything which might encourage incredulity in the mind of any other person.[1] For the rest, he treated this particular story of the cure, and a hundred stories equally strange, with much patience and impartiality. "There are the facts and there is the evidence of witnesses," he seemed to say: "but I do not force belief on others." As regards

[1] For instances of credulity, see Journal, ii. 164, 279, 397; iv. 130.

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the modern miracles an equal freedom is left by the Roman Catholic Church. Belief is not obligatory; but for the persons who have the requisite amount of faith the narratives are deemed to be to edification.

While on this same journey, Wesley completed his eighty-second year, thankfully in his Journal recording his freedom from pain or even weakness. The Conference of his Irish connexion was then proceeding, and its unanimity was gratifying to him. A better feeling towards the Church he remarked in the preachers, and a larger gathering of them than ever came round the Holy Table at St. Patrick's.[1] Immediately after this he embarked for the homeward voyage.

In 1787 the venerable man again started on his long north-western tour. On the road he visited Wednesbury, where he could not but recall to memory the dangerous riot of forty-four years before. In his Journal he only remarked that his followers of that locality showed their "ancient spirit," which was one of single-minded heroism. He did not omit to add that most of his early hearers had now gone to their rest. After halting at Manchester and some other places, he was disappointed of finding place in the coach to Holyhead, and was obliged to hire a post-chaise. On the road, and also in the sailing packet, he read a new book on "sacred classics;" and on reaching Dublin he revisited all the old haunts, and some new ones. In "Bethesda"

[1] Journal, iv. 302.

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chapel-of-ease (near the Rotundo) there was introduced into worship some singing of the operatic kind, to which he listened with much impatience. Yet there was consolation when he found at this church more than seven hundred communicants. Persons of distinction were now found amongst his hearers; "fair blossoms," he remarked, from which he hoped that fruit might some day come.

At Carlow town, described by an earlier traveller of celebrity as "low church—high steeple," the venerable man admired what he saw, and enjoyed converse with firm friends in the little county town. Proceeding towards the south-east, he remarked in Wexford that the farming people were much like those of Yorkshire. At Clonmel the ill-behaviour of the people in church somewhat angered him, yet it was hardly likely that in a little town of Tipperary the demeanour of worshippers would be found more correct than that he had observed in the churches of Dublin, or of many of the English towns. Far above the long valleys of the adjoining counties of Tipperary and Cork is the mountain range, which is traversed by a road. When the aged traveller wrote of this as the "horrid road" to Cappoquin, he may have referred to its roughness; yet it is more likely that he shared in the feeling of even the most cultured men of his own time, who commonly applied the word "horrid" to mountains and rocks, and, in truth, to all but smooth and cultured natural scenery. Castle Barnard, near Bandon, being passed, not without much praise of the ruling family

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there (the Barnards), Wesley reached Cork, where once the Methodists had been proscribed as rogues and vagabonds.

Leaving Cork, Wesley went northwards, by many tedious stages, to the county of Cavan, where he saw and mused over the last resting-place of the learned Bishop Bedell, whose memory is still dear to Irish Protestants. Thence another long and wearisome journey, which saw an adventure, not the only one of its kind, yet characteristic and calling for mention.

The reader must here be reminded that Wesley, like other men of tough fibre, and hardened frame, and rare bodily endurance, was somewhat intolerant of anything like indolence or weakness, either in man or beast. He looked on men, or on animals, as constituted much like himself, and therefore well able to begin the day early, and to take prodigious exercise until nightfall. Making, therefore, no allowance for a diversity in bodily powers, he was apt to expect too much from those mute obedient animals to whom he was so much indebted. Many of them had carried him round the kingdom, from year to year, faithfully; nor had accident befallen him while on many a journey on horseback he read his pocket volume, the reins carelessly thrown in front. When more advanced in life, he had been drawn in his "chaise" from south to north—in fact, all over the three kingdoms—in such a way as to inspire too much confidence in the endurance of his hard-worked steeds.

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Wesley, be it remembered, believed in a personal and active Satan, who was ever ready to check his course. And when on this journey one horse had a swollen shoulder, and soon afterwards another fell lame, and at a later point a third poor animal broke down, it did not occur to the hardy patriarch to accuse himself of demanding too much from them. Not to overdriving did he ascribe the failures on this journey. He simply deemed that Satan, although rendered powerless over himself, had power over the inferior animals, and took this particular way of hindering the work of evangelization.[1]

At Omagh on this tour there was also a curious incident. Dr. Wilson, a neighbouring rector, wished that Wesley should preach in his church; but, having some scruple, wrote to the bishop, whose reply at once conveyed "a full and free consent." One of Dr. Wilson's parishioners was, however, of a different mind, and took an effectual method of enforcing his own wish by hiding away the key of the church door. After all preliminaries, including the bishop's consent, Wesley was therefore excluded from the church, and was fain to preach in an orchard. In this locality the stately mansion of the Abercorn family called forth his admiration. He went on to Strabane, once more hindered on the road by the inadequacy of a horse. Significant is a later note of a single stage of twenty-six miles, performed not on a level road, but in one of the most hilly districts in the kingdom.

[1] Journal, iv. 363.

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And the roads of Ireland, now so smoothly engineered, were then roughly metalled—enough to break any carriage in pieces.

All through this district the scenery and the cultivation drew forth comment in the Journal, no less than the attention of the people in the towns, as shown by crowded and earnest congregations.

No entry in the Journals surpasses in interest that made in Dublin on the 28th of July, 1787:—"I had the pleasure of a conversation with Mr. Howard, I think one of the greatest men in Europe. Nothing but the mighty power of God can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments. But what can hurt us if God is on our side?" Would that a Boswell had been present to record this conversation. Passing by some curious notes descriptive of Dublin and its Parliament, we find Wesley once more on board a "Parkgate packet," bound for Wales. In the night the vessel was nearly wrecked on the rocks near Holyhead. The passengers "went to prayer," and they were all saved from death, which seemed imminent.[1] The sudden return from America of his faithful lieutenant, Dr. Coke, with good news of the progress of the work there, helped to brighten up this summer of 1787.

Before returning to the south, Wesley rested for a day at Bury, in Lancashire, where he was hospitably received by "Mr. Peel, a calico printer"—an energetic man of obscure origin, who founded

[1] Journal, iv. 372.

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a wealthy family, and whose son was to become eminent as a statesman. The journeying this year was longer than usual, for it included the islands of Wight, Jersey, and Guernsey, as well as Cornwall. At St. Helier's Wesley became acquainted with a "prodigy of grace," whom in deep devotion he was disposed to rank with Madam Guyon, the pious mystic, whom he always thought of with admiration. In short, incidents were plentiful. Once more the aged man resolved to visit his friends in Ireland; and when, in 1789, this farewell was undertaken, its nature seemed to be understood on all sides. The voyage across the uncertain waters of the Irish Sea was an unpleasant one, and naturally was felt to be less tolerable with the advance of extreme old age. On landing, the veteran once more showed his loyalty by a sermon on the recovery of Hezekiah—referring to the improved state of King George III. "Great was our rejoicing," he said. Very early on the Sunday morning he met the society in the "New Room;" and, faithful to old usage, he asked all of those who were not going to their own parish churches to meet him at St. Patrick's. This was the trysting-place for Irish Methodists, and long it so continued; and on that day they again met their venerable director at the Holy Table, where there were five hundred communicants. Afterwards he met the society, and once more addressed them.

From Dublin, the venerable man set forth on a southward journey, once more to see people who

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more than forty years before had gained his affectionate regard. His natural force had now abated; but still he preached in court-houses and barracks, as well as in churches. The last Conference in Ireland at which Wesley was present was held in July, 1789. He spoke of the preachers there assembled in words of high commendation, especially as regards their unanimous resolve to abide in the Church. On the Sunday they all were gathered as usual at St. Patrick's, when the dean preached, and there was, as always on these occasions, a large throng of communicants. Then came the affecting "farewell" to his warm-hearted followers.

The last voyage from Ireland was a tedious one of thirty-six hours. True to his old habits, the venerable man preached on the deck of the packet. On landing he made his way to Leeds, to meet his English preachers at their annual Conference. One memorable circumstance of this year was the production of that sermon on the "ministerial office," which pointed out that, under the Christian and the Jewish dispensations, there had always been a clear distinction between those ordained or appointed to sacerdotal functions, and those in the lower rank of the evangelists, or, as Wesley called them, "expounders" or lay preachers. This sermon was written while he was sojourning in Cork in the May of 1789; and it seems to have been preached before the Conference both in Ireland and England.[1]

[1] Whitehead, ii. 498.

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It was first printed in Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*, for May, 1790.

We may glance briefly at the later history of Methodism in Ireland. The dissensions which arose soon after the death of their patriarch, between what may be styled the Church and the Anti-Church sections of his preachers, do not seem to have extended to Ireland, where the "original plan" was faithfully adhered to for many years. The question came to the surface, however, in 1814–1816; and it was arranged in the manner which had become inevitable. The Conference followed the lines of the English "plan of pacification," which, in fact, left it optional with the societies either to remain in union with the Church, or to have their plenary services conducted by their own preachers in their own chapels. This plan for Ireland (dated August 3rd, 1816) declares, however, that all the members were left free to communicate where they pleased. Some thousands of them were dissatisfied with this variation from the original plan as laid down by the founder; and they resolved to remain apart, under the appropriate title of "Primitive Methodist." For nearly half a century they maintained this attitude, resorting to the church for the sacraments, and to their own chapels (especially in the evening) for prayer and the discourses of their own lay preachers. Once a year they assembled at St. Patrick's, when one of the canons preached to them, and there was a special celebration. Of late years this society, historically so full of interest, has again

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seen important change, the larger section of its members having been absorbed within the Wesleyan Methodist body. The smaller section retains its name and its ancient fidelity to the Church. Once a year it holds its Conference, the president being one of the bishops. The "Primitive Church-Methodists" of Ireland ought, in short, to be studied by all who are interested in the question of corporate reunion; for they maintain their special usages as they derived them from Wesley, without in the slightest degree swerving from their allegiance to the Church. Perhaps in England there is no living illustration of the old Methodism; while in Ireland there are still such Methodists as Wesley himself would have commended, and who adhere to what was so often called the "original plan."

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CHAPTER XIII.

METHODISM IN AMERICA.

THIS is not the place for a review of Transatlantic Methodism, strong as the temptation may be to linger over a narrative of strange and almost romantic interest. The beginnings were of the humblest kind, soon to be followed by a check arising from the momentous strife between the fast-growing colonies and the mother country. The great States of the West achieved their independence at a moment when ecclesiastically they might be regarded as unclaimed and vacant ground. At this juncture some of Wesley's more resolute followers entered the gap, and took possession of the territory which none had occupied, laying the foundations of a structure, the size of which was soon to astonish the world.

In the year 1760 a few Methodists embarked at Limerick, in a small vessel bound for what was then a little English colony. A local preacher, Philip Embury by name, was the leader of the little band of emigrants which first introduced into America

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the distinctive name and usages of Methodism.[1] Eight years later, Wesley was earnestly requested to send over to New York, not money only, but teachers: and this demand was made known through him to the Conference of 1768. Two of the preachers, Pillmoor and Boardman by name, voluntered to go; and by their hands was sent over, not only many kind messages, but also a contribution of fifty pounds. On reaching America, the two envoys found a good work carried on by Captain Webb, whose name frequently appears in these annals. He, although an officer in the British army, was acting as the virtual head of a little society of a hundred persons at Philadelphia; while at New York there was already a large and crowded chapel. A few years later, Wesley sent over as his deputy in the oversight of the American Methodists, a rough but trusty lieutenant, Thomas Rankin; but he soon gave offence to those whom he found engaged in the work, and he returned to England having accomplished little. Then the mission was for a time broken up, and the missionaries were scattered by the revolutionary war. Only one of them remained, and the name of Francis Asbury has long been one of renown in America. Newfoundland saw a different and a more tranquil history. Laurence Coughlan, whose career was short, although a hearty Methodist, was a missionary working under the auspices of the S.P.G. That vast and thinly populated territory was as destitute

[1] Strickland's "Life of Asbury."

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as were the adjoining States of the ministrations of religion; and in the extensive district of which St. John's is the centre, there was to be found but one aged clergyman.

Wesley was true to his character of a Tory and High Churchman. When the exciting discussions on the great American question arose, he deviated from his rule by entering the arena of political strife. When this great dispute came to an end, the question was presented to his mind in a more clear and urgent way than before—How was provision to be made for supplying the ministrations of religion to these vast continents?

The Anglican Church at that moment had, by various obstacles, been prevented from taking possession of the vacant territory. Letter after letter reached the hands of Wesley, showing that through tracts of country hundreds of miles in extent, there was no religious teaching whatever. There was, of course, no administration of the sacraments; nor did the scattered settlers, whose children remained unbaptized, know how to obtain aid in the emergency. Wesley deeply felt for the condition of these neglected Christians; and he asked the Bishop of London to ordain one missionary for them. The answer was unfavourable, for there were difficulties, legal and political, in the way; and they were such that no English bishop could then be induced to ordain for America.[1]

[1] Shortly afterwards missionaries were duly ordained by Scottish bishops, free from the legal constraints which at that time impeded the action of their English brethren.

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The position of Nova Scotia was no better than that of Newfoundland. Urgent calls for assistance came thence; and, in reply to one of these applications, Wesley wrote to Mr. Black a letter, in which he explained once more that the Bishop of London had felt himself unable to ordain even one missionary. Yet he hoped to be able in some way to supply the need. He could not, he added, advise any one to go alone. Our Lord had sent out His disciples two and two. Again he wrote to a correspondent in Nova Scotia, expressing no surprise at a reported falling off in visible results, for such had been found to be the case at home: "a swift increase is generally followed by a decrease equally swift." Revivals, as he by this time well knew, were never to be counted on as to the permanence of their results. Two years later, there was a better organization in Nova Scotia, which then took rank as a circuit in Methodism.

In many other ways the urgency of the case in the great American continent was made apparent. Letter after letter came. "We are greatly in need of help," wrote that most earnest and self-denying of missionaries, Francis Asbury, in 1784. This appeal led Wesley into one of the most momentous acts of his life, and, as many deem it, one of the most indefensible—the "ordinations for America." Dr. Coke now appears to have suggested to Wesley that he was willing to cross the Atlantic and organize a mission, if authorized so to do; and he probably suggested also that a new commission

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might be given to himself and to Whatcoat and Vasey, who were to accompany him, by the "laying on of hands" by Wesley himself. It was, however, felt that Charles Wesley and the more ardent friends of the Church would regard such an ordination with sorrow, if not with scorn, and therefore that secrecy was desirable. The result of the pressure from America and of Coke's solicitations appears to have been this. Early one morning, at Bristol and in his own room, with the knowledge of very few others, Wesley went through a form of ordination, after which Coke regarded himself as equivalent to a bishop, and Whatcoat and Vasey regarded themselves as ordained presbyters. The former was to "superintend" the missions in America, while the two latter were to act as ministers of the Word and sacraments. At the same time Wesley addressed to his followers in America the letter (Bristol, September 10, 1784) of which, as it has often been reprinted, it will suffice to give a summary.

This letter set forth the unusual position of the American States, freed as at the moment they were alike from secular and from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It also states that, according to King's account of the Primitive Church, elders were, equally with bishops, able to ordain; but that Wesley had hitherto never acted on this theory, being determined as little as possible to violate the order of the Church to which he belonged. The case of America was, however, new and exigent, there being few ministers of religion there, and no present means of increasing

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their number. Therefore, wrote Wesley, he had appointed Dr. Coke and Asbury to act as "superintendents," also Whatcoat and Vasey to act as "elders" by administering the sacraments.

The letter was read at the Conference at Baltimore on Christmas Day, 1784, Dr. Coke being there present: and it was at once proposed by a Mr. Dickins, and agreed to without dispute and almost without discussion, that the American Methodists should take the title of "The Methodist Episcopal Church"—a title which they have ever since retained and used. This assembly further declared "the office of bishop elective," and by a vote they adopted Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury as their first bishops, manifesting even at this early period a desire for the utmost degree of independence, as well of Wesley, as of England. Asbury at this period had received no kind of ordination; but Dr. Coke was at hand and ready to supply whatever was wanting; and the latter, by a written memorandum (Baltimore, December 27, 1784), declared that he had "set apart" Asbury for the offices successively of deacon, elder, and superintendent of the American Methodists. The American historian states that Asbury's nomination to the office of bishop "did not increase his power or his usefulness." His influence was, without doubt, considerable, both before and after his being "set apart" by Dr. Coke; yet he was always treated rather as an equal than a superior by Garrettson, and by the other American ministers whom he superintended. Asbury's own

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ideas of his office also were of a very humble and moderate kind; and he refused to accept the promotion offered to him until assured of the full consent of his brethren. Following the example of him whom they call the "pioneer bishop," succeeding superintendents or "bishops" of the American Methodists have always refrained from such interference in Church matters as would be not only proper, but inevitable, in the case of rightly appointed and duly consecrated bishops. Certainly Asbury, or rather his office, was treated with no extraordinary respect by his brethren, for they addressed him as though one of themselves while he lived. Since his death they have fitly honoured his memory, as that of a singularly earnest and able pioneer of religion over vast and neglected territories.[1]

Wesley, in his appointment of Coke and Asbury, was most careful to omit the word "bishop" and to use only the word "superintendent." When he heard that the title of "bishop" had been, on their own responsibility, hastily assumed by his followers in America, he was deeply grieved. He never affected to confer the episcopal office on Coke, or on any other clergyman; and he expressed in strong terms his discontent and annoyance at the course taken by the American Methodists.

[1] Asbury was born in England in 1745, went to America in 1771, and after incessant and fruitful labours died in Virginia in 1816. These details are taken from Strickland's "Life of Asbury," and from the memoirs of F. Garrettson.

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Wesley did, however, purport to give—perhaps without due thought, but still with full intention—a commission to administer the sacraments.

This is not the place for weighing the excuses which were deemed sufficient by himself and his followers. The urgent and derelict case of America was a fact by which his mind was oppressed; and there can be no doubt of his perfect sincerity and truthfulness, both as to the course taken and the narrative given of it. Evidently, however, after making all due allowances, Wesley went astray in this matter of the ordinations for America. For it has been a rule of the Church universal from the earliest age that only one holding the rank, bearing the title, and fulfilling the duties of a bishop shall ordain presbyters and deacons; and the concurrence of three bishops has always been regarded as essential for canonical consecration to the office of bishop.

Wesley, while he explained the circumstances of this new appointment of ministers to his American followers, commended to their notice a revised Liturgy, "little differing from that of the English Church"—a Church which Wesley again described as "the best-constituted national Church in the world." He further enjoined on his people in America a weekly administration of the Lord's Supper.

Even now he retained the fixed belief that none of these steps involved him, or any of his followers, in separation from the Church. When the super-

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intendents in America assumed the title of "bishop," John Wesley was almost as indignant as his brother Charles. Both of them felt that the border line, if not crossed, had been very nearly approached, and that it was now for them more difficult than before to rebut the charge of secession. Still they argued that nothing done in the American continent affected their *status* as English Churchmen. That no rivalry with the Church was intended is apparent from the instructions issued to the preachers in America. These harmonized with all the instructions given from time to time in England. Where there was a church no services were to be held in the chapels during church hours; in brief, Methodism was, even in America, designed by the founder to be supplementary to the Church. This clear indication of Wesley's own design must be taken into account when his proceedings with regard to America are criticized. For the proceedings of the American Methodists after the arrival of Coke amongst them, Wesley was hardly responsible.

Before quitting this branch of the subject, it must be noted that some delay in responding to the urgent calls from America would have wrought no real injury. Although the English bishops could not, at one time, see their way to ordain missionaries, a short interval only elapsed before the Scottish bishops, under no bondage to the civil power, were able to send out Bishop Seabury, and so to supply the deficiency.

It is also to be noted that after Wesley, in ex-

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treme old age, had allowed Coke and the others to involve him in this new and doubtful course of action, those across the Atlantic, for whom this great sacrifice had been made, refused to be bound by any of his limitations. They had, as they thought, gained from him the "ministerial succession;" and they cared little for anything else. Their breaking away from his control, and their disregard of his monitions, was a source of natural grief to the patriarch; and it would hardly be too much to say that, in very few years, he regretted the new and exceptional line of action into which he had been led by over-anxiety to meet and provide for the spiritual needs of the dwellers in America.[1]

The growth of Methodism in America has been extraordinary. Little regard is paid on that continent to tradition, or the possession of ancient title-deeds; so that a new system is, on the whole, quite as likely to prevail as an old one. The "superintendents" (who are now called bishops) of the Methodists there count their followers by millions.

It only remains to mention that through this channel several of the English Methodist ministers of our time can trace what may be called a Presbyterian succession. In the year 1842 Dr. Soule, who, through Asbury, and therefore mediately through Coke and Wesley, could claim to be in such a line of succession, visited England. He took part in the ordination service of the Conference

[1] Tyer. iii. 498.

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of that year; and laid his hands on some who have in their turn become senior ministers, and have laid their hands on others. To an undefined extent, therefore, there is a "Presbyterian succession" in modern English Methodism. Little or no value is set on the authority so derived: for the Methodist ministers base their claim, as their predecessors of forty years since did, upon a spiritual "call," followed by appointment to, and recognition by "the congregation." Still, when the question of ministerial pedigree is concerned, a question always interesting to Churchmen, the episode of the superintendents sent by Wesley to America, and its consequences, have some significance, and therefore they call for mention here.

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CHAPTER XIV.

WESLEY IN SCOTLAND.

THERE are not a few reasons for the comparative ill success of Methodism across the northern border. The Scots pride themselves, and with some justice, on their early training, even in the lowest ranks of society. Their temperament, calm and critical, is such that they are less affected by novelty or by sentiment than their southern fellow-subjects. From the first there were some who doubted whether Methodism had any mission in Scotland; and Dr. Adam Clarke himself deemed that, except in Glasgow and Edinburgh, there was no occasion for Wesleyan chapels.

Wesley, however, at an early period, was impressed by the belief that the fields were ripe unto harvest in all parts of the United Kingdom. Resolving to visit Scotland, he exchanged letters on this point with his early friend Whitefield, who warned him that the Scots had their own fixed opinions—doubtless referring to their preference for the theology of Calvin and Knox. Wesley replied

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that when opening a mission in Scotland, he would give no provocation to disputers—he would only address the people on fundamental truths.

His labours in North Britain, though not producing great results, have, however, some interest for us. In his Journal the Presbyterian and the Anglican modes of worship are contrasted, and always to the disadvantage of the former. Again, having been in his old age persuaded to exercise the supposed power of ordaining ministers for America, Wesley was led to suppose that the like excuse existed in the case of Scotland; and, obscure as are the facts at this distance of time, it is beyond question that he gave some commission, by "laying on of hands," to a few of his preachers to officiate in Scotland.

In 1753 he visited Glasgow, and noted that the fine cathedral of that city was at that time miserably defaced, having no symmetry or beauty. The worship of the Kirk he did not admire; yet he noted that the people were devout—indeed, more devout than ordinary worshippers in England. They did not gaze round, and bow to their acquaintances. In 1764 he spent a day, merely as a visitor, in the hall of the General Assembly of the Kirk. The dull verbosity of the speakers wearied him, and there was a visible waste of time and energy. He now attended a Communion Service of the Kirk, and he described it as at once far less simple and far less solemn than that of his own Church of England.

Thenceforward, Scotland appears to have been

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usually comprised in his long journeys of inspection, undertaken with some regularity at intervals of about two years. In 1766, after resting for many days amongst his warm-hearted friends at Newcastle, he went northwards, but hardly with the same fresh, untiring vigour as before. The age of sixty-three is, with most men, a kind of turning-point; and the traveller noted on this journey a new sense of weariness. Mrs. Wesley and her daughter Jenny were his companions; and the tour embraced places so far apart as Dundee and Dumfries. In those days travelling in a chaise was a service of danger. Once when a horse was "embogged," Wesley, though rolled into the mud, escaped, as he usually did, without injury. He was slight, active, wiry, and much alive to surrounding facts; and if he believed that Providence specially protected him against all accidents and disasters, it would be impossible to prove that he was wrong in that belief.

On this tour in particular he commented freely on Scottish Kirk history, to him a topic far from agreeable. The old Scottish reformers he described as "fierce, sour, and bitter of spirit." If they could but have manifested a Christian disposition, he doubted not but that they would have been far more useful in their day and generation. These extracts will give a fair notion of Wesley's impressions of the past religious history of Scotland.

Passing over several years we come to 1774, when Wesley again traversed a large portion of the

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country, now without the companionship of a wife. He witnessed a Scottish funeral, and was shocked by the absence of any religious service—"a coffin put into the earth, and covered up without a word." This reminded him of "the burial of an ass," in the record of Jehoiakim. On arriving at Arbroath, he rejoiced to find a people as loving and simple of heart as any in England; but this was a town for which he had a special affection. The peculiarities of Scottish law—always unintelligible except to Scottish lawyers—were brought home forcibly by an incident during this journey. He was arrested for debt, and suddenly, at the instance of a dishonest suitor, to whom, however, justice was in the end meted out.

In 1776 Wesley was at Greenock, on what is in Scotland called a "fast-day;" and he noted that the day was not observed by the natives with any kind of abstinence. At Aberdeen he read the newly published western tour of his venerable friend, Dr. Johnson, and he praised it highly. At the kirk he only noted the dull formality which reigned there; while at the Anglican Church of the same city he remarked on the excellence of the sermon, and on the pious demeanour of both priest and people. At Banff the intention was that Wesley should preach in the assembly-room, but an invitation being given to the Anglican Church, this was readily accepted. He took the occasion, on finding a congregation of persons of a higher class than usual, to repeat for their benefit some of those

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scathing monitions which he was always ready to address to wealthy or fashionable hearers. At St. Andrews he noted the peculiarities of the Scottish University system. The period of study seemed to him very short; and he contrasted with that his old round of duty as a tutor at Oxford, when every week-day in the year found him hard at work amongst his pupils.

Somewhat later—in 1779—again visiting Glasgow, he awarded high praise to the Anglican congregation there. Evidently their demeanour was far more commendable than that of ordinary church-goers of that period in England. Again he contrasted the worship of his own Church with that of the Presbyterian Kirk: "I attended the Church of England service in the morning, and that of the Kirk in the afternoon. Truly 'no man, having drank old wine, straightway desireth new.' How dull and dry did the latter appear to me, who had been accustomed to the former!"

The Scots at all times received Wesley with much deference and attention. In 1772 he was presented with the freedom of the old city of Perth; and shortly afterwards the same compliment was conferred on him by the magistracy of Arbroath. In the last-mentioned town his attention was drawn to the massive ruins of the abbey, and he was told that the Reformers had burnt down the aisles. "God deliver us from reforming mobs!" was his exclamation.

It was on the last but one of his many journeys

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to Scotland that Wesley took special pains to make the good people of Glasgow understand the exact position of Methodism. It was not designed to be the rival of any Church, he said. It stood alone in this respect, as a brotherhood requiring of those who entered its ranks no holding of definite opinions, nothing but "the desire to be saved." The Methodist still adhered to his old accustomed mode of worship. "Here is our glorying," said the founder of the great society which in his day was marked by comprehensiveness. There was no narrow wish of separation off within the boundary lines of a sect. How little did Wesley dream that what to him appeared the noblest feature of his system should disappear in less than half a century!

In 1790 the aged man undertook his last long journey to the North. On the road he halted, as had always been his wont, at the pleasant town of Macclesfield, within view of the lofty moorlands of Derbyshire. This was his last Easter-tide spent amidst the Church militant; and here, and also at Manchester, he was again cheered and revived by the sight so dear to him, of a large throng of earnest communicants. This, by the patriarch and by his warm-hearted friends in many towns and cities, was felt to be a last leave-taking. Wesley was now eighty-seven years of age; yet he preached both morning and evening without much weariness. Several pages of his Journal are at this point missing, a fact that will excite no wonder in those who know the history of the Wesley manuscripts.

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The narrative reopens with Scotland, where the venerable man took "a solemn farewell" of his friends at Aberdeen. Glasgow and Dumfries were also revisited; and the latest of these Scottish journeys was brought to a close in the month of June, 1790. There is ample evidence that, although Wesley managed to perform these journeys, marks of fatigue and weakness were very perceptible to others. He became, however, more interesting to the general public as his age and his reputation increased; and numbers flocked to see, rather than to hear, the remarkable man whose name had even then become historical. In the private circle he was cheerful and talkative as ever, with a charm of his own, which all around him acknowledged.[1] Levity he always disliked; yet there was the rare combination of wisdom with artless simplicity, which always rendered his company attractive to the best of his cotemporaries.

Such was Wesley in advanced age; but it is no derogation from his merits and his fame to say that his immediate helpers and familiar friends had an influence over him, in his last years, which none had ever gained before. We have seen that the patriarch, when at Bristol, was persuaded to appoint Coke and his fellows "superintendent" and ministers of the missions in America. The case of the Transatlantic States was one so strange, that, in view of it, ordinary rules might almost be disregarded. "Necessity has no law"—so the jurists

[1] Tyer. iii. 608.

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say; and even canonical rules have admitted of exceptional cases. Therefore there is some excuse, plausible if not adequate, for those ordinations by which Wesley too hastily sought to provide for the spiritual needs of North America.

Scotland was otherwise situated—there being within her borders a true episcopal Church, of undoubted claims and evident vitality. Wesley himself had often taken part in the worship of the Scottish Church, and had noted with approval her superiority to the Kirk of the majority. Why then did he take upon himself to ordain several of his preachers for Scotland? No very satisfactory reply to this question can be found. Evidently the excuse that Wesley's own Church of England had no jurisdiction in Scotland was inadequate, based as it was on an imperfect conception of the nature of the Church. If Wesley held the higher view of those who obey the bishops as successors in office of the Apostles, his action with regard to a country under true episcopal jurisdiction was indefensible. If he held the lower view of those who recognize as a proper Christian Church the Presbyterian established Kirk, still the apologist must be at fault. In either view he had no shadow of right to intrude any of his preachers, claiming the full ministerial office, into a territory occupied by duly appointed and orthodox pastors. We must endeavour to make the best excuse for the aged man which the facts themselves will justify.

In 1785 his most trusted friends had passed away.

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Grimshaw, and Perronet, and Fletcher, and the rest of the group, were no longer at his side; Charles Wesley was, moreover, an invalid who had long survived the force and activity of his prime. John Wesley was only under the influence of some ambitious and active followers of the new generation. Dr. Coke, the most prominent of these, great as were his merits as a missionary, was as unsound and inconsistent an adviser in matters of Church polity as could well be imagined. He appears to have thrown his influence into the scale, when some of the preachers, not for the first or the fiftieth time, urged Wesley again to act on the theory of the virtual equality of presbyters with bishops. In his days of vigour such solicitations were firmly disregarded: now the old man, "over persuaded" by those around him, "yielded to their judgment," and "laid his hands" on certain of the preachers before he sent them away to Scotland. In August, 1785, he thus "set apart," to act in Scotland, Messrs. Pawson, Hanby, and Taylor. This function, as it seems, also took place in secret, nor is any record of its exact nature preserved; but it is most probable that it was "by imposition of hands," and that Mr. Creighton and another of Wesley's ordinary clerical helpers took part in the transaction. Strict limitations as to the future sphere of work were, as we have all reason to believe, duly given, in order that this act should not appear a violation of Church law and usage; and Wesley certainly persuaded himself, if he failed to persuade others, that these "ordinations for Scot-

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land" did not involve any secession from the English Church. During the three following years some other preachers were "set apart" by him for Antigua and other distant places. The ordinees were about nine in all.

Some persons have thought that Wesley performed similar acts of ordination for England; but, while very direct evidence of this is absent, there are several distinct reasons for believing that the story has no real foundation. Wesley probably gave "letters of orders" to all his ordinees. If these can be found, they may throw light on a very obscure passage of his history. The only document of this nature hitherto published is that which he gave in 1784 to Dr. Coke. Many of its passages are very significant, as they set forth, in the language of deprecation and even of apology, the absence of spiritual oversight and jurisdiction in America. What, we may ask, could the "preamble" have been in the case of Scotland? His own Church (argued Wesley) had no jurisdiction in Scotland: therefore any action of his, in or for Scotland, was in no sense an interference with, or an opposition to, his Church. This is intelligible, though defective, reasoning. It is of moment to observe that this reasoning is utterly subversive of the idea that Wesley ordained *for England*, and it is but one of many pieces of evidence, all pointing to the same conclusion. Were these functions really accompanied by "imposition of hands"? A venerable Wesleyan minister, who had been president of

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the Conference, told the present writer that he had received from Dr. Coke "letters of orders" *without* any imposition of hands. Perhaps the preachers, if there were any "set apart" to act in England, were "set apart" by a written document, and not otherwise? Mr. Watson, whose authority none will dispute, states the "ordinations" to been been *for America and Scotland* only; and the trustees' declaration of 1793 agrees with this exactly.[1] The verdict with regard to any such appointments *for England* must be "not proven."

Significant also was the reception in England of Mr. Pawson, who, having been ordained by the aged man for Scotland, lost little time in coming south, bringing with him, as he thought, the title of Reverend and the other authorities of the full ministry. He was at once told that south of the Tweed he was now, as before, only a layman. Wesley, rightly or wrongly, in extreme old age deemed himself enabled, for missionary purposes only, to confer a certain ministerial authority out of England. We do not defend the course he took with regard to America and Scotland, but we confidently point to his own reasonings as showing that they did not allow of his assuming any such supposed power in and for England; and, unless new and much better evidence be forthcoming, we may fairly question the statement sometimes met with, that he on any one occasion affected to ordain ministers *for* England.

[1] See page 242.

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Charles Wesley strongly disapproved of these transactions. While they were going on they were concealed from him; and when they reached his ear, he wrote to his brother in terms of remonstrance, pathetic rather than fiery. His last days were, he said, embittered, and an indelible blot had been placed on the very name of Wesley. The reply of John to his afflicted brother was far less satisfactory and candid than his letters were wont to be. It was evasive and even weak, and it closed with words implying, though not expressing, regret for what had occurred.[1] It intimated that if Charles had been at hand to be consulted, the elder brother might not have fallen victim to the over-persuasion of persons at his elbow. Charles Wesley's reply was full of dignity and good feeling. As to secession, there was, he said, less excuse for it now than ever: the bishops had never molested them, and several of the bishops were now very friendly, while the churches were all open to them. It was unnecessary to argue on that uninterrupted succession (of bishops) which he (Charles) believed in, while his brother did not. The alarm had arisen from Dr. Coke's rashness, and from John Wesley's supporting him (Dr. Coke) in his ambitious designs. When the "fatal step" was taken at Bristol, Charles was close by, and if he had been taken into counsel, the elder brother would have done better. (John Wesley had admitted this in his last letter.) Charles Wesley now closed by declaring his unalterable

[1] Tyer. iii. 445.

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affection for his brother. John wrote again, briefly defending Dr. Coke, and intimating that it was better to agree to differ. Even this did not close the correspondence, for Charles wrote again, "I believe you have been too hasty in ordaining. I believe God left you to yourself in that matter, as He left Hezekiah, to show you the secret pride which was in your heart." To write thus was, he finally declared, to discharge a duty to God and to His Church.

These transactions, as they became known, not unreasonably led to the revival of a rumour that John Wesley was about to secede from the Church. There was then, as now, much liberality shown towards the clergy in construing unusual and even erratic passages of their lives; but even the more liberally inclined thought that the exercise of a supposed right to ordain by a presbyter of an episcopal Church was going too far. Many things might be done, but surely this must amount to secession? Such was the view which Lord Mansfield took; and expressing this to Charles Wesley, it tended to increase the mental distress of the poet of Methodism. John was, however, unshaken; and he again publicly declared, to the astonishment of many, that he had no more thought of secession now than forty years earlier.

We have seen that when the preachers who had received this new commission returned to England, they expected to bring it back with them. Their mistake was soon made evident, and in a manner

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to them far from pleasant. Wesley, hearing that Pawson wore gown and bands, and acted the part of a clergyman south of the Tweed, administered a sharp and decisive rebuke.[1] After Wesley's death the whole Conference took exactly the same course, refusing to recognize as in any way superior to their brethren the very few preachers who had received from the patriarch the new and questionable commission.

[1] Tyer. iii. 497, 574. While Pawson and McAllum—the latter "set apart" only after much entreaty—were in Scotland, they were treated as clergymen and were addressed as "Reverend." When they came south again, all was altered—their commission, in Wesley's opinion, having no shadow of validity in England. Pawson did not like the loss of dignity. "We are to be," he wrote, "just what we were before we went to Scotland—no sacraments, no gowns, no nothing at all."

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CHAPTER XV.

AUTHOR, COMPILER, AND EDITOR.

So far we have regarded the founder of Methodism in his character of a religious "revivalist," and the organizer of a new brotherhood of Christians. In modern literature it has become common to bracket his name with that of his early friend Whitefield, as though there were a complete resemblance between them. The truth is that they were, in constitution, in training, and in career, widely apart. Whitefield had unequalled power of swaying great crowds, and had, therefore, the more distinct place of a popular orator. Wesley's influence, though of a more peaceful, was of a more enduring kind. It was felt, on the whole, less in the highway and the market-place than in the comparative quiet of his "preaching-houses" or mission chapels. Whitefield's followers were not united in one brotherhood, and they were described by himself as but a "rope of sand." The followers of Wesley were, on the contrary, gathered within a zone of personal influence, and they fell into habits of close association. The organization of the classes and bands mainly

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secured this result; while there were other influences which bound together the Methodists with ties as strong as any which had existed in mediæval guild or religious confraternity. Amongst these ties was the possession of a separate literature.

Wesley was a diligent student, whose habits were formed during long years of tutorial work at Oxford. His range of reading was too wide to admit of very close and special attention to one branch of study; but discursive habits of reading rather fitted him for his special position as regarded the large and ever-widening circle of his followers. Popular literature, especially of the religious kind, hardly then existed; and he therefore found it desirable to provide, for the Methodists of all ages, reading both for Sundays and week-days. With this view he opened his publishing and bookselling rooms, and devoted no small part of his time to the work of editing and compiling. He had little opportunity of producing original work of the higher kind, and therefore he is not now classed amongst the more eminent of the English writers of the last century. His powers of sharp insight and rapid condensation were bestowed on the preparation of a long series of publications, intended for the benefit of readers of the middle and lower classes. He addressed himself, not to a few scholars, but to many thousands of the comparatively unlearned and ignorant.

We have seen that his earliest attempts at authorship were in the Oxford days, when he wrote

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some sermons and devotional books. Influenced by the example of his brother, he also composed some hymns; and he was especially happy in his translations from the German. Several of these will always maintain a high place in literature of this kind, and perhaps they may all be ascribed to the period 1736–1741, when he was intimate with some of the best of the Moravians.

One of his favourite books—that attributed to *Thomas à Kempis*—he had translated and published in two editions (8vo and 24mo) in the year 1735. In 1738 his sermon preached before the university on the text, "By grace are ye saved through faith," was published; and henceforth for fifty years he issued from the press sermons at frequent intervals. Most of these appear in the standard collection of his works, though it so happens that the first four volumes of the sermons have a special importance of their own. They alone find place amongst the standards of doctrine which are legally binding on the whole Wesleyan connexion. Wesley's friends and biographers, Coke and Moore, who knew him intimately, say of these four volumes that they contain "the substance of what he usually declared in the pulpit. He designed by them to give a view of what St. Paul calls 'the analogy of faith.' They are written with great energy, and as much as possible in the very words of the inspired writers. . . . He has often told us that he made a conscience of using no more words on any subject than were strictly necessary

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. . . his perspicuity is as remarkable as the manliness of his style."

From time to time small volumes of hymns and sacred poems were issued by the two brothers. Little method was observed in these early publications, as they contained new compositions and reprints of old ones—a few written by John, but the larger number by Charles. At length, in 1780, they issued a goodly collection in a single volume, containing all that they deemed of highest value in the numerous earlier issues. This book, which was systematically arranged, prefaced by some quaint remarks on hymnody, may be regarded as the nucleus of that hymn-book which now, after two or three enlargements, is used by the Methodists.[1]

Soon after the commencement of his active career in England, Wesley published a selection from that private Journal which he kept (in a kind of shorthand) almost to the end of his life. At intervals of a few years he revised and published further portions, and this custom he continued down to the year 1786. The Journal, as it now appears in print subsequent to that date, was not revised by himself—a distinction which the student will bear in mind. But, excepting this last portion,

[1] Five of the hymns in Lord Selborne's well-known "Book of Praise" are ascribed to John Wesley:—"Jesu, behold the wise from far" (No. 70); "Lo! God is here, let us adore" (No. 135); "O Thou to whose all-searching sight" (No. 230); "Now I have found the ground wherein" (No. 348); and lastly, "Commit thou all thy griefs" (No. 406), and Part 2 of the same, "Give to the winds thy fears."

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the four volumes of the Journals are as thoroughly authentic as they are graphic and interesting. If they were carefully edited, and the numerous blanks for names, etc., supplied, they would take their place with the most valuable memoirs illustrative of the last century.[1]

In 1742 appeared the first defence of Methodism, in the shape of a small tract by John Wesley. Some of his numerous critics had accused him of holding "a medley of opinions," for the composite nature of his system had even then attracted special notice. It was scarcely worth his while to reply that, while reproducing "many things said before by Calvin or Arminius, by Montanus or Barclay or the Archbishop of Cambray," his theology was not a mere medley. This was his first appearance in print as a controversialist; and although often driven again into the polemical arena, it was not one which he ever entered from choice. His aversion to mere controversy is well shown by the readiness with which he deputed his friend Fletcher to enter the lists, when the fierce dispute arose with Toplady and the Hills, on the decrees of Calvinism.

Amongst Wesley's original works of the controversial kind must be mentioned his "Farther Appeal" (1745), which meets the charge of bringing in new doctrine. Now, as at other times, he argues that the Methodist view of the doctrine of Justification is that alike of Holy Scripture and of the English Church. In reply to a charge by

[1] See Appendix XII., "Wesley's Journals."

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the Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. Smalbroke), he affirmed —and few will now contradict him—that the "enthusiasm," of which so much complaint had been made, was chargeable on standard Anglican writers, like Pearson and Ridley, and much more so on some of the most renowned of the Fathers. This work, a well-considered and systematic defence of Methodism, had a very large circulation. From the sale of this and other publications it soon appeared that a considerable profit arose. The question how to dispose of the increasing profits of the Methodist press arose, and it was easily settled. Personally, Wesley refused to allow himself to be enriched. In the early days at Oxford, when religion first dominated his mind and daily life, he resolved to keep his personal expenditure at the lowest point, and not to "lay up treasure on earth." As his income increased, his personal outlay was still limited to some thirty pounds a year. Yet while he lived, there were always those who said that, from the profits of a large and successful publishing business, he must needs be enriching himself. But at his death there was found little beyond the property in copyright, etc., which was necessary for the carrying on of his various publications. He had earned, and had given away in charity, about a thousand a year: and he had laid up absolutely nothing.

Very few were his intervals of leisure. The longest of them enabled him to undertake, and nearly complete, one of his most important works—

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the "New Testament Notes." In 1753, under medical advice, he remained at Bath for many weeks, writing more closely than usual, for that was for him a state of rare quiet and seclusion. In this work he received some aid from Charles Wesley, Philip Doddridge, and other friends; but he was more largely indebted to the "Gnomon" of Bengel, then recently issued—a work which he always praised in high terms. These "New Testament Notes," first published in 1755, still hold their ground; nor can they ever pass out of date, since they also are among the legal standards of doctrine in Methodism. They have been much praised for their clear and concise style; and when the famous James Hervey wrote to his friend of early days, to acknowledge the newly published volume, he found fault only with its extreme brevity.

Early in his career Wesley began the practice of reading over, and abridging for the press, books dealing with a wide variety of subjects. Many of these compilations were done on his journeys through the kingdom. In the chaise or the public coach he was thus employed, and even sometimes on horseback. Now and then he abridged, for the use of his own people, books written by contemporary authors, not always, as it seems, with a due regard for copyright claims. Young complained that this freedom had been taken with his "Night Thoughts;" and Dodsley, the publisher, also declared himself a sufferer through Wesley's too hasty appropriation of the literary work of others. But more commonly the abridging and reprinting was of books of a much

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older date. Thus, there was an edition of the early Christian writers, which was a work of much time and labour. The "Christian Library" occupied no fewer than fifty volumes, the first containing the Epistles of SS. Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Deeming these three Fathers to be in some measure inspired, he placed them on a higher level of authority than the later Fathers.[1]

Sometimes he condensed and reprinted works of which he did not wholly approve, deeming them to contain passages of value. Mosheim's well-known "History" was one of this class. Science and general literature were not overlooked; and John Wesley even ventured on a popular book of household medicine, which, although somewhat crude and unscientific, testified to the public spirit, the industry, and the research of its compiler. Once he condensed and republished a work of pure fiction, "The Fool of Quality," written by Henry Brooke, of Dublin. Being no Puritan, Wesley held this very romantic story to be worthy of regard, not only as amusing, but as calculated to soften and amend the heart by opening avenues to pity and benevolence.[2]

In 1775 there was high excitement through England, when it was known that the colonists of the North American colonies were likely to throw

[1] The "Christian Library," came out during the years 1749–1755. In his own copy of the work Wesley made many corrections, with the aid of which there was a republication in thirty volumes, 1819–1826.

[2] Coke and Moore, 365.

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off their allegiance to the English crown. Parliament resolved to increase the military forces, and to take all other measures to suppress a rising, the extent and outcome of which were very much underestimated. The most eminent Tory of the day, Dr. Johnson, published a famous pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny;" and Wesley at once took the same side, with an amount of warmth which surprised alike his friends and his enemies. No slight occasion could, indeed, have led to his appearance as a political pamphleteer; but here he felt deeply, and he hesitated not to exert all his influence on behalf of the British power. He printed, under his own name, the "Calm Address to our American Colonies," which is stated to be nothing but a translation, somewhat abridged, of Dr. Johnson's essay. Far from resenting this freedom, the magnanimous Johnson spoke of it as a compliment paid to himself, in a letter which is the hands of the present writer. This letter acknowledges a presentation through Mrs. Hall (Wesley's sister), and though printed before, it must be given here:—

Dr. Johnson to J. Wesley.

"SIR,

"When I received your 'Commentary on the Bible,' I durst not at first flatter myself that I was to keep it, having so little claim to so valuable a present; and when Mrs. Hall informed me of your kindness, was hindered from time to time from returning you those thanks which I now entreat you to accept.

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"I have thanks likewise to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the publick I know not, but I have now no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right, who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato staid.

"I am,

"Reverend Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Feb. 6, 1776."

There was an active party on the side of the colonists in the American dispute, and they were not backward in their reproaches. One of the tracts issued at this time against Wesley was entitled, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, or an Old Jesuit Unmasked." Mr. Toplady, of whose more religious labours his celebrated hymn "Rock of ages" will give an idea, was full of indignation and bitterness; and, good man as he was, he vilified Wesley most unworthily, in a tract entitled, "An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feather'd." Such were the amenities of controversy in the religious world of England, only one hundred years ago.

The circulation of Wesley's "Calm Address" was immense, the more so as the Government were delighted with it, and helped to distribute it broad-

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cast. On the other hand, there was much anger amongst the "poor deluded rebels," as the colonists were then styled. The result was that Methodism in America passed under a cloud; and the pioneer missionaries whom Wesley had sent thither were obliged to withdraw, or to hide themselves. After a short interval, all was quiet once more, and the cloud of unpopularity passed away. Wesley's appearance in the lists as a political writer was forgiven by the Americans; and his system was welcomed in the liberated States, where Methodism has ever since flourished as it has done on no other soil.

Wesley, as "an old Tory," could not be silent when, in 1776, Dr. Price brought out his "Observations on Liberty." Such opinions would, he said, if encouraged, "upset all government, and bring in universal anarchy." It is not surprising that the king's ministers should have been glad to secure the good-will of one who wielded rare personal influence through the country; and therefore Wesley's interference for a time in political literature seems reasonable. But these instances were exceptional. He adhered with much firmness to the special work which he deemed prescribed for him by Divine Providence, without any desire of fame as a political writer.

A different walk of literature was the careful preparation of the various class-books for his favourite school of Kingswood. He drew up elementary books on history, natural philosophy, and

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other subjects of study; and amongst those enjoined for the upper forms were abridgments of the two best works of his early friend and adviser, the Rev. William Law. Other abridgments were published with a view to the training of his young preachers, who, when they joined his standard, were, with a few exceptions, "raw and unlettered." When opportunity arose, he formed a class of them, and read with them as he had done with his pupils at Oxford.[1]

His favourite books of practical divinity—*à Kempis* and the treatises of Law—have already been mentioned. Where he found a book thoroughly well drawn up, he was not led by any feeling of vanity to draw up another. Hence that Eucharistical volume, so often reprinted, and so long sold "at all the preaching-houses in town and country." This scarce volume was in great request and increasing demand so long as the Wesleys lived.[2] After their death, sacramental doctrine being to a great extent lost sight of by the preachers, the volume was disused and forgotten. The same appreciation of good work already done, the same fixed desire to economize time and labour, led to the use of a very few tracts, frequently reprinted, on the other sacrament. When, therefore, it is said that few of Wesley's sermons directly enforce and exalt the sacraments, the statement is literally true, while the inference attempted to be drawn from it is unfounded and misleading. Wesley's own discourses

[1] Tyer. ii. 34.

[2] Jackson's "C. Wesley."

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on Holy Baptism, and the Eucharistical volume which he edited, were regarded as ample and exhaustive; and they were placed in the hands of all the early Methodists. The Wesleys had no leisure to say things over again in other words—no wish to multiply books and tracts unnecessarily.

In 1778 began the publication of a monthly magazine in form not unlike the *Gentleman's* and the *European*, containing about eighty pages, and designed for the amusement as well as the edification of the Methodists. Its name, the *Arminian*, shows the nature of the controversy then uppermost in the minds of the founders; while its contents were so varied as to commend themselves to all classes of readers. There were essays, religious "experiences," and frequent sermons for the elder readers. There were also scraps of poetry, anecdotes, and narratives, some of them of most startling kind. Wesley himself was the editor, and Thomas Olivers was sub-editor—a very careless one, as it appears.[1] At first the printing was of a coarse kind, only exceeded by the engravings, which were hardly better than caricatures of well-known Methodistic faces. Ten years later the magazine was more carefully brought out; and the portraiture improved rapidly when confided to the care of the engraver Ridley.

[1] Tyer. iii. 285. Olivers was the author of those two fine hymns, "Lo! He comes," and "The God of Abraham praise." When he essayed to enter the lists against Toplady and Hill, they took unworthy advantage of his early pursuits, and ridiculed him as "Tom the Cobbler."

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The magazine changed its name when the Arminian and Calvinist controversy ceased to interest the public; but it has flourished to the present day, and is said to be the oldest "monthly" known to the religious world.

John Wesley's early controversy with Bishop Lavington, of Exeter, has been mentioned. Another dispute he had at a later date with a clever and caustic priest, Father O'Leary, of Cork. That the latter had the best of the controversy when he condemned those penal laws in Ireland which Wesley defended, appears from one simple fact. Those laws were afterwards swept away, with the approval of all men. It is pleasing to find that the Roman clergyman, whose controversial powers were of high order, and his former antagonist met and enjoyed each other's society at a friendly breakfast table in Cork.

The last original work of Wesley seems to have been a biography of his friend Fletcher, published in 1786. Thenceforth he only revised and reprinted former writings—sometimes compelled so to do by the fact that others were found to be reprinting his works without permission. As a rule, he contributed a new sermon to his *Arminian Magazine* every other month. In 1788, through this medium, he advised his followers to adhere to the parish church, even where the incumbent did not preach, or did not even know, the truth. The great question of sacramental administration here was involved. Though the preachers had "scriptural knowledge" worthy of all praise, they had not, as he again and again

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pointed out, the authority of the ministerial office.[1]

At the close of this year he allotted several days to the correcting and editing of five volumes of poems by his deceased brother Charles. Some of these verses were, he confessed, indifferent; while others were "excellently good." He noted a distinction between himself and his brother. The poet was, poet-like, addicted to solitary contemplation; while for himself, the busy organizer and man of the world, "to the desert" had at no time been a watchword.

The candid historian is bound to state, though regretfully, that John Wesley published a revised Psalter and Prayer-Book. This was primarily, if not entirely, for the use of the American Methodists; nor does it seem to have been adopted in England. Its preface states that it differs from the Book of Common Prayer in a few specified ways. (1) Many of the Holy Days are omitted; (2) the Sunday service is shortened; (3) some sentences in the Baptismal Office and in the Burial Service are omitted; (4) many of the Psalms are omitted, and others are shortened. It is worthy of note that some years previously Wesley had read, without sympathy, an essay finding fault with the English Liturgy. If we give up this, he asked, who could supply us with a better Liturgy? Throughout his life he had spoken in terms of high admiration of the book which now, when more than eighty years

[1] Tyer. iii. 564.

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old, he was induced to revise and expurgate. A national Church has, according to our Articles, full power to make such changes, and the Church of Ireland has lately revised her Prayer-Book. But for an individual clergyman to do this, and more, was clearly indefensible. It seems that Dr. Coke, of whose ambitious and meddlesome turn of mind there is abundant evidence, was largely concerned in this affair; and he probably made some changes in the book without the knowledge or concurrence of his aged friend. If Wesley did venture on a revision of the handiwork of the great English Reformers, if he struck out passages which Ridley and his fellows deliberately retained, it is hard to believe that even the Methodistic founder should dare to abridge and revise the devotional Psalms of the royal singer of Israel.

In 1789, amongst the contributions of Wesley to his magazine, was a sermon on the remarkable history of the rich man and Lazarus, which he held to be no mere parable, but a true narrative. Also he contributed an essay on "Inspiration," and another on the manners of the times. These productions, which show a wonderful amount of mental energy in the man of eighty-six years, are not all found in the standard edition of his works.

At this very advanced time of life, resolved, as ever, that no uncertain sound should reach the ears of his followers on the momentous question of secession from the Church, he published the "Thoughts on Separation." It was customary with

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many persons to speak of this as a mere question of expediency; and many of the more prominent of the Methodists, so regarding it, only waited until his death should allow of their following their own devices. He now warned them all, and nearly for the last time, that this was not a matter of expediency but of principle, though his charitable spirit would not acknowledge that the tendency on their part was so strong as to be irresistible. "In spite of all temptations, they will not separate from the Church," wrote the aged man, with more of apostolic zeal and of love for Christian unity than of prophetic foresight.

In 1790 he reprinted, with some alterations, a translation of the New Testament, which had been first issued, with his explanatory notes, some thirty-five years earlier.

The *Arminian Magazine* of this year contained another protest against secession from the Church—if possible stronger than those which had preceded it. After referring to his lifelong admiration for the Church as the best in the world, and to his perfect assent to her doctrines, he again recounted the strange facts which had attended the origin of Methodism, and the irregularities, or rather variations from Church order, which had so often been laid to his charge. The concluding passage, though it has been often quoted, cannot here be omitted: "I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it, when

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I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it. . . . In flat opposition to these, I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it."

The magazine now also contains that famous sermon on the ministerial office, which reminded his preachers of the limited nature of their calling as lay evangelists and teachers of the Word, and contrasted that with the higher calling of the fully authorized ministry.[1]

These last utterances of the venerable Wesley were evidently drawn from him by the exigency of the time. His societies were large and flourishing, and remarkably so within the ten years preceding; and as they grew, the desire for independence grew with them and strengthened with their strength. The tendency to Nonconformity was more visible to bystanders than to those within the Methodistic circle; and many remarks were made, and forecasts given, as to the destination of the movement, so soon as its founder's personal influence should be withdrawn. Yet to the last, judging kindly of the minds and designs of others by the standard of his own, Wesley denied that secession (he did not use the word schism) was intended, or was ever likely to occur. Even now he maintained that the varia-

[1] See Appendix VII., "The Ministerial Office."

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tions from Church order into which he had been forced did not involve secession. He always now, he said, as through his life, attended the regular services of the Church, and he advised others to do the same. To the Church he would adhere, for to secede would be a sin, although to vary from its established order in some points was right.[1] Some of his followers—even the best of them—felt secession for the time inexpedient, not sinful. They deemed it lawful, yet not so necessary as that it might not be postponed. He, on the contrary, deemed it wholly and under any circumstances wrong. "He lived and died," writes the latest biographer, "a hearty but inconsistent Churchman."

The last of the long series of sermons by Wesley was on "Faith, the evidence of things not seen," and it was written but a few weeks before his death. This is full of deepest interest, when it is considered by whom, and when, it was written. It pictures, as with the hand of a seer of old, the passing away of the land of shadows, and the dispersion of all the clouds. Then at the end the released spirit comes, in the new break of lasting day, to discern Him who "in unclouded majesty is over all, blessed for ever."

[1] Tyer. iii. 636.

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CHAPTER XVI.

WESLEY AT THE NEW CHAPEL, CITY ROAD.

For thirty years the modest building known as "The Foundry," in Windmill Street, Finsbury, was sufficient. The time came when it was all too strait for the growing societies, of which it was the central office, depository, and head-quarters. Even had the place been large enough, the leasehold interest was coming near to an end; and it was necessary to find new and more commodious premises. A large plot of ground was secured, facing the great Bunhill Fields Cemetery, in the City Road, less than two hundred yards from the old Foundry. It was not freehold, being held for a term of years under the City, and derivatively under an ecclesiastical lease. But Wesley doubted not of the permanence of his new house of prayer. Nor was his confidence misplaced; for in our own day, the lease being nearly at an end, terms were made for a better tenure; and this being now secured, "the New Chapel," although not as Wesley left it, will for a certainty be visited by unborn generations of pilgrims from afar.

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It was built by subscription; and not only Methodists, but many Church people who were not of that order, were amongst the contributors to the building fund. Its first stone was solemnly laid by Wesley in April, 1777; and the edifice, being completed, was publicly opened for divine service on All Saints' Day, 1778. On the day of its opening, Wesley preached twice in the "New Chapel," as it long was called. In the morning his text was from Solomon's prayer, on the dedication of the Temple; and in the afternoon on the multitude around the Lamb in the Apocalyptic vision. The chapel was opened on the "free and open" system, against which the trustees, from motives of economy, soon afterwards protested. But Wesley maintained his own opinion on this point; beyond this, anticipating those of our own day who require "the men to sit on one side, and the women on the other."[1]

In earlier years Wesley had frequently made notes in his Journals, showing an appreciation of detail in architecture. The form of *auditorium* which he approved of was the round or hexagonal: and some of his acquaintances adopted this form, as may be seen in Spa Fields and Tottenham Court Road. But instances of this were always rare in England, and the architects soon abandoned it; so that when his model chapel came to be built, it was in the conventional oblong form. It was a large and substantially built structure, of a kind not uncommon in the early years of George III., low-roofed, but not

[1] Tyer. iii. 222.

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without a certain dignity. Of ornament there was little. A small portico of four stone columns at the west, and a semi-circular chancel at the east end, both of Portland stone, added some grace to the design, the rest of the edifice being of brick. The "restorers," indeed, wrought some injury of late years, adding balustrades of stucco, and some other adornments; but all this left the "New Chapel" sufficiently attractive to such as loved to trace out the historical landmarks of Methodism.[1]

Right and left of the chapel are various smaller structures, designed as dwellings for assistants and as class-rooms. The largest residence of the group stands in front of the rest, and is at once seen by the stranger on his right hand as he approaches from the highway. This house was built as a home for Wesley, and from 1779 to his death in 1791 he resided here when in London. His own rooms were on the principal floor, where are still shown the place of his death, and the bureau and armchair which he used. A widowed sister (who was not one of his society) acted as his housekeeper; and in the manse there also resided some junior preachers, who assisted him in his work. One of them acted as his secretary and travelling companion.

The pulpit, from which the Wesleys preached, will be noticed by the visitor; but he will miss the

[1] After the chapel had stood for a hundred and one years, a fire broke out and nearly destroyed it, on the 7th of December, 1879. Unfortunately, a hard frost prevailing, the fire brigade could not procure water to quench the flames.

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prayer-desk, from which the prayers and lessons were for many years read by one of the assistant clergy of those days. In the chancel the Ten Commandments were inscribed according to the canon. It also contained six marble tablets, bearing long inscriptions. Two of them were in memory of the Wesleys; while the other four recorded the merits and services of Fletcher and Coke, and of two eminent preachers of a somewhat later period, Dr. Clarke and Mr. Benson. The visitor will not omit to find, in the cemetery at the rear, the modest tomb of the founder of Methodism.

The chapel was built for regular services by clergymen, weekly Communions being held from the outset. But minor services being frequent, a capacious vestry or "morning chapel" formed part of the group of buildings; and to this Charles Wesley would have willingly limited the lay preachers. Their desire to take part in the services of the chapel itself was soon manifested, and a difference arose, in which their claims were, as usual, opposed by Charles Wesley. His desire was that the New Chapel, although not consecrated, should virtually become a chapel-of-ease in the parish of St. Luke, served only by regular clergy. Finally a special arrangement was made, under which some clergymen were always attached to the chapel for the purposes of the weekly Communion and the frequent services, while the preachers were recognized as helpers. Messrs. Creighton, Dickenson, and Richardson might be styled the regular curates at

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City Road of the Wesleys; but the race of these clergymen died out early in the present century, no successors being appointed to them.

The New Chapel, damaged as it is by the restorer and by the flames, possesses much of historical interest; and it will ever be regarded as the central shrine of Methodism. Year by year it is visited by increasing numbers of those who in the American and Australian continents bear the name of Wesley. It is said that thirteen millions of Christians are more or less strongly attached to Methodism, a fact which will give some idea of the historical position of the chapel which Wesley built, the house in which he died, and the enclosure which contains his tomb. With the last twelve years of his life, as with his death, this place is very closely associated.

At this time Wesley was no longer viewed with suspicion as a dangerous "enthusiast." He had outlived all opposition, and the voice of detraction and of envy had subsided. Many of the bishops and clergy—though hardly alive to the importance of the movement—held him in high esteem, and showed in many different ways their appreciation of his ability and his character. His career was known to have been one of unselfish and most successful labour; and in extreme old age he had come to be regarded in the twofold light of a public benefactor and an ecclesiastical celebrity.

He now, as for many years before, had a living wife, but unhappily into the scheme of his daily life she entered not. In his earlier years he had

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spoken and written against matrimony, but in 1751 his opinion changed; and after some consideration, and doubtless in all sincerity, he thought it right to marry though this involved the resignation of his Oxford fellowship. Wesley married Mary, the widow of Mr. Vazeille, a Threadneedle Street merchant, her fortune being settled on herself. There is much obscurity as to the real character of this lady; and, according to some accounts, she was imperfectly educated, irritable, and suspicious. But it is fair to remember that she was in a position of extreme difficulty, as the wife of a public man who was frequently absent on long journeys, and who maintained a large and confidential correspondence with Methodists of both sexes. More than once the ill-assorted pair resumed their separate paths in life: yet in a will of 1768 Wesley named his wife his residuary legatee. It has often been incorrectly stated that when they finally severed, Wesley wrote of her: *Non eam reliqui—non dimisi—non revocabo.* This was really written in 1771; and in the following year Mrs. Wesley was again travelling with her husband through Yorkshire. On some of their journeys they were accompanied by her daughter Jenny, for whom Wesley had an affectionate regard, and to whose children he finally bequeathed the coins and other articles in his bureau. After residing apart for several years, Mrs. Wesley died in 1781, a very laconic note of her death appearing in her husband's Journal. It is clear that the marriage was an unsuitable one, and that the blame of

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their unhappy married life cannot be wholly laid on either.[1]

Wesley, when he took possession of his abode in the City Road, although seventy-six years of age, was as active as at any earlier period. His self-imposed duties were, indeed, of the most weighty and diversified kind. The services of the New Chapel formed but the smallest portion of his work, for there he was assisted not only by his brother and by a junior clergyman, but by some of his preachers also. Over those scattered through London and its ever-widening suburbs, he had of course the oversight; while the general supervision of his chapels and preachers through the United Kingdom also rested on him. Each year he undertook a long tour of inspection, in addition to several shorter journeys. In religious and disciplinary matters he had the sole direction of the increasing ranks of the preachers; while he gave counsel to a large number of persons of both sexes, whose letters to him on all imaginable subjects were duly answered. He had the exclusive control of several schools, and of several charitable institutions. He was sole judge and arbiter in all differences and difficulties arising between and among preachers, trustees, stewards, and other office-bearers in the societies. Beyond all this, he was the responsible chief of a large publishing and printing business. To its literature he had always been the chief contributor; while in his later years he was a frequent writer in the pages of that monthly magazine of which he was the editor.

[1] Tyer, ii. 288; Southey, ii. 131.

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During this closing period of his life (1779–1791), Wesley was one of the most famous of Englishmen. We have seen that his illustrious cotemporary, Dr. Johnson, found but one fault in him, that his society and conversation could not be obtained for the space of more than an hour. But though he could hardly find time to chat with a great literary celebrity, Wesley deemed it a duty, though an unpleasant one, to visit more than once or twice the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, when under sentence of death for forgery; and he found time to give advice and consolation to the flighty and mischievous Lord G. Gordon, when he also was in a prison cell.

And fully occupied as were his moments, he also deemed it right to accept frequent invitations to preach charity sermons in the London churches. Many of these he briefly noted in his Journal; and such entries show him to have been the popular preacher of the day, the Magee or Liddon of one hundred years ago. A few instances may illustrate the altered attitude of the Church towards Wesley in his later years. On the 23rd of November, 1777, he preached at Lewisham Church for the Royal Humane Society. On the following day he spent a pleasant afternoon with Bishop Lowth, whose easy yet dignified manner he much admired. Another meeting with a courteous bishop occurs during a Welsh tour in the August of 1784. Later on, he spent an hour with the Bishop of Gloucester, of whom he spoke most kindly, though as an ascetic, not in theory only, he was unable to repress a fear

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of the consequences—on the mind of any man—of living in a noble palace. At Worcester, at Cardigan, and elsewhere, the clergy came around him; for no longer did they suspect his orthodoxy, or augur unfavourably as to the results of his mission. It is needless to multiply proofs that in his old age Wesley was highly reverenced throughout the length and breadth of England.

His fidelity as a preacher of truth is well shown, towards the end of his life, by his behaviour when he was courted in general society. Increasing honour and popularity did not affect the style of his sermons, which still warned the rich amongst his hearers in more severe terms than the poor. His sermon on "the Good Steward," preached before the Countess of Buchan in the character of chaplain to the countess, was a most direct and faithful warning that an account will be required of all earthly gifts and advantages. In his later days Wesley was much in the society of the wealthy; yet he declared that he had found the more genuine specimens of Christians amongst the poor.

Is there any record of a clergyman at the age of seventy-six going through the work described in the Journal for Christmas Day, 1779? At four o'clock a.m. he conducted a short service in the New Chapel, City Road. At West Street Chapel (near Leicester Square), Wesley read prayers and preached at noon. In the afternoon he preached again at the New Chapel. In the evening he preached at St. Sepulchre's, one of the largest of all the London

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churches. And this is not a selected instance of "labours more abundant," but one taken almost at random from his Journal.

On a Sunday of that year Wesley happened to be at Leeds; and his aid being requested, he took part in the administration to over seven hundred communicants. Another Sunday he spent in the same town, two years later, when the number of the communicants was very much larger. The old church of Leeds in which Wesley preached, and helped in the administrations, was destroyed to make way for the new one, under the late Dr. Hook. The last sojourn at Leeds was an unusually happy one, for there was opportunity given to Wesley for converse with Fletcher, the best beloved of all his followers. Leeds was one of those towns which Wesley always delighted to visit. On the other hand, there were some large towns which were unsympathetic, and of them he spoke in quite another tone. Birmingham, for instance, he never seems to have praised; and he spoke in slighting terms, not only of his own chapel at Birmingham, but of the sermon which he heard in the old church.

In June, 1781, Wesley spent a fortnight in the Isle of Man. Here there had been fierce opposition at one time, but all was now changed. He had a good word for every one in his Journal—for the governor, the bishop, and the clergy. His own preachers he thought a more healthy and active set of men than those in England. It was a model place, for there were throughout the island no

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Romanists, no Dissenters of any kind. The whole population belonged to the Church, while the proportion of Methodists amongst them he noted with much content. Amongst other spots of interest he visited was the ancient abode—"venerable, though not magnificent"—of "good Bishop Wilson."

In 1783 Wesley went over to Holland, merely for change of scene and friendly intercourse with foreign Protestants. His notes on the cities which he saw, and the people with whom he met, are very graphic. Evidently he liked those grave Dutch gentlefolks, who treated him with so much attention; and, old as he was, he went across the sea to visit them again, three years later. The port of embarkation was Harwich, and the landing-place was Helvoetsluys. The voyage back was stormy and tedious; and now, as on some former occasions of danger on travel, Wesley noted that there were answers to the prayers of faith. He had a most firm belief that it was possible to call in the aid of Divine Providence to assuage the present trouble, and so move the mountains on land, and calm those of the raging sea.

The New Chapel, although not under licence of the bishop of the diocese, and therefore in some sense a rival to the parish church by reason of its weekly Communions, appears to have aroused no opposition or ill will amongst the clergy. There was to be found amongst them some apathy, some curiosity, and also some friendliness. There is no record of distinct ill will. It was reserved for the

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true Dissenters, represented by their ablest spokeman, Rowland Hill, to denounce and vilify the aged minister of the New Chapel. Wesley was now described in print as a crafty slanderer and an unfeeling liar. It is hard to believe that such language could be used, even by pious Dissenters of his own time, towards one whom they knew to be the most resolute of Churchmen.

Some glimpses of the inner life of Wesley's manse (formerly numbered 23, and now 47, in the City Road) appear on the pages of Tyerman. He mentions the customary breakfast of the local preachers on every Sunday morning as an ancient usage, not aware, as it seems, that this survived to a recent period. The vast teapot, with the thanksgiving verse inscribed on its side, which was used on these occasions, probably for a full half-century, may (or lately might) be seen in the house. There was little of luxury visible in the City Road arrangements. Some silver plate was carried away from Wesley's house by burglars in 1784; and but for the vigilance of Henry Moore,[1] one of the young preachers then resident with Wesley, the robbery would have extended to the money (product of collections, as may be supposed) in the house. The silver spoons and forks so abstracted were not replaced; for when Wesley was afterwards questioned

[1] An early biographer of Wesley, and one of his executors. He was an Irishman, able, energetic, versatile, and—in old age at least—of irritable temper. The present writer, having in early days met with Mr. Moore, writes from actual knowledge.

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by the Inland Revenue officials, it appeared from his laconic reply that he was almost destitute of any of those articles of silver plate which would render their possessor liable to duty.

Amongst the younger men who now sought for Wesley's friendship were two who became deservedly famous in the annals of the English Church. Of the Rev. Charles Simeon, Wesley had a high opinion.[1] With William Wilberforce the tie was much closer; for Wesley had very strong opinions, which he did not care to disguise, as to the immorality of that slave system which English statesmen then upheld. He gave the warmest encouragement to the earnest young man from Yorkshire, whose enviable destiny it was to remove the chains from the slave, nearly half a century later.

When over eighty years of age, the venerable Wesley began to feel a burden before either unnoticed or very lightly borne. Naturally he could not walk so fast or see so clearly. Still he remained active and courageous, not shrinking from toil, and rather avoiding than seeking repose. At some length he jotted down, for the benefit of others, the causes to which he ascribed his own extraordinary health and vitality—constant exercise in the open air, early rising, strict temperance, the power of sleeping often and soundly, absence of care or worry.

His equable mind did not dwell on painful topics, nor were any anxieties allowed to weigh heavily; yet there were at times misgivings, especially when

[1] Journal, iv. 281, 386.

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he thought of what must follow when his controlling hand should be withdrawn. At Glasgow he found a new "preaching-house"—chapel he never called it—which had a look of Presbyterianism by no means to his liking. "Perhaps an omen of what will be when I am gone," was the comment. Even over the most active of beings a thought of coming rest will pass now and again. At Raithby he saw what appeared to be almost an earthly paradise; yet as quickly as the idea of repose came, it was discarded —only in the better world did he expect to find any repose. This particular tour has more than ordinary interest, for it embraced the last visit of the patriarch to his birthplace. Epworth, unhappily, was but little improved since the days of ill-conditioned Mr. Romley, and here arose the one difficulty which this man of unfailing courage and resource was unable to surmount. The Methodists of Epworth refused to enter a church where they were assailed from the pulpit in unjust and bitter language. How is it possible to blame them?

This trying difficulty—the existence of Methodism in the shape of actual nonconformity with powerful excuse—did not arise in many places. Wesley found it, however, in the place of his own birth during this excursion to the midland counties.

While on the road towards Derby, in a valley now most smooth and fertile, but then roughly paved and wild, near the famous Peacock of Rowsley, the travelling chaise was overturned through the breaking of the axle. Wesley and his companion,

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Jenny Smith (the daughter of Mrs. Wesley), escaped injury: but he always had good fortune in finding personal safety, though in journeyings often and in perils in the sea.

In July and August of that year he spent some quiet days. Few quiet days had been his for half a century, and now he thought over earthly matters and "revised his papers."[1] The decease of his brother Charles was much in his thoughts, though it cannot be said to have had a serious effect on either mind or body. There was current a kind of expectation that the elder brother would not long survive.[2] On hearing of a prophecy of this kind, his only remark was that he was not careful about a matter which he left serenely with Providence. That he should again face the tedious journeys to Ireland and Scotland seems wonderful; they were, however, accomplished without detriment. After his return the aged man preached three times on a certain Sunday in November, in two of the large churches of London and in the New Chapel; but he truly added, "It was too much for me."

The constant round of work admitted but of few holidays, though now and then a day was passed at some quiet rural place, where, enjoying the hospitality of a chosen friend, the hours were spent in

[1] After such a process more than once gone through, it cannot fairly be said that any of his remaining manuscripts were allowed to remain by accident. Therefore, being so selected by himself, they deserve publication.

[2] Journal, iv. 415.

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writing or in reading. In January, 1790, he had a brief interval of repose at Peckham, then a peaceful suburban village, where he read the memoirs of Mrs. Bellamy, and was diverted. One passage, indeed, in this gossiping book he utterly disbelieved. The authoress told how that David Garrick, while on a sea voyage, meeting with a volume of Charles Wesley's hymns, had thrown it overboard contemptuously. This was an idle fabrication, said Wesley, for two reasons: firstly, Garrick was a man of sense; and, secondly, he was personally acquainted with the poet.

Wesley's last northern journey must have been affecting to himself, and much more so to many of those firm friends to whom he now bade farewell. "The lovely people of Newcastle," as he called them, were endeared to him by long memories of happy days spent amongst them and their fathers. In Norwich he had "become an honourable man," and writing this in his Journal, his thoughts must have reverted to the days long past, when the clergy there looked askance at his "enthusiasm." Now, by special invitation, he preached in two of the Norwich churches. There were no less than thirty-seven churches in that city, and it is highly significant and instructive to find that on the Sunday morning sermons were usually preached at only two churches out of thirty-seven! Two sermons on Sunday morning among thirty-seven churches! Is it necessary to add anything to this? Are not the irregularities of the movement, the chapels, the

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lay preachers, the open-air sermons, excused when one fact so astonishing comes home to the mind? And this was not at an early day in the century. It was towards its close when the Church had been partly aroused from slumber.

By this time Wesley had outlived all enmity, and was revered by his fellow-men. At Swaffham the clergy came to the preaching-house; and long before the time announced for the arrival of the venerable man, extraordinary interest and curiosity was sure to be excited in any town. At Diss there was a timorous rector, willing to invite Wesley to his pulpit, yet half afraid to do so without consulting the bishop. The bishop's opinion was asked, and his reply was favourable, as the replies of all bishops to similar queries had been for forty years past.

The last entry in the printed Journal bears date 20th October, 1790. Wesley was in London, as was usual with him, towards the end of the year. In the morning he preached in the great church of Spitalfields, and in the afternoon at St. Paul's, Shadwell. Highly characteristic was the last of all the long series of texts—"One thing is needful."

So appropriately closed his own record of the earnest and unfaltering labours of sixty years. Such was the last entry in Wesley's own Journal.

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CHAPTER XVII.

LAST DAYS OF THE FOUNDER.

THE Journal for so many years diligently kept up, and filled with personal adventures and graphic outlines of men and events, was now laid aside. At the age of eighty-seven, Wesley, with much vitality remaining, yet felt some measure of that weariness which rendered the grasshopper a burden to many who were much junior to him. He was less able to write, and that to use the pen had become difficult is shown by his handwriting at this period. Yet his anxious supervision of the societies did not relax; and the increase in the numbers had been wonderful of late years. In 1780 there were in England but 52,000 enrolled Methodists; in 1790 there were 134,000. During the same period the number of the regular preachers, or itinerants, wholly devoted to the work, had increased from 213 to 541. The movement which had its beginning amongst the lower grades of the people, had now reached upwards so as to affect the middle or substantial citizen class. Many of those who had once been poor, by industry

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and sobriety and thrift, had bettered their position. The improved worldly position of no small number of his followers caused anxiety to Wesley in his extreme age. Many of the opulent traders and small gentry who were now in the "United Societies" did not follow the old ascetic self-denying rules by which the earlier Methodists had been governed. The new generation did not deem it necessary to attend the services at four, or even at six, o'clock in the morning. Nor were they content to sit side by side with poor persons, on plain benches, or to adhere to the primitive simplicity in dress, and in the appointments and usages of their homes. Handsomer chapels were built, and in them comfortable pews were set apart for the more wealthy Methodists. Wesley was, as we have seen, no Puritan at heart, nor was he severe on all who wore ornaments, or otherwise aimed in their costume at some degree of elegance. Yet he deemed it necessary to address solemn warnings to those who were in danger of falling under the influence of wealth and growing luxury. To such he spoke in a sermon of startling directness of language, which set forth "the danger of riches."

Perhaps he showed less of wisdom when he implored some who were physically unfit to follow his example, to attend the service before sunrise. To this he attached what must be regarded as undue importance. "Give this up," he said, "and Methodism will degenerate into a mere sect." The degeneration which he foresaw must be ascribed to

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other causes—not to the mere omission to gather at five o'clock a.m., for religious exercise in a schoolroom or vestry.

In the early days Methodists were in dress hardly distinguishable from Quakers; and this peculiarity (which has now disappeared) Wesley strove to maintain. "Be dressed," he said, "from head to foot as persons professing godliness." Observing the tendencies of the daughters of the Methodists, he denounced "ribbons and gauze," as also "elephantine hats or bonnets," which he described as "scandals of female modesty." With more of insight, he recommended plainness of living, the habit of self-denial, and of benevolence to others. Conformity to the mind of the world he denounced in the very spirit of the apostle; and he had a fear that the rapid accumulation of money which he witnessed all around him, might lead to a consuming love of money: and this was, he declared, enough to sink them "to the nethermost hell."[1] Who will take the warning? he asked; and more than once he wrote as though quite hopeless as to the spiritual state of the more wealthy of his people. The true Christians were, he declared, found not in the rich citizen class, but amongst the poor.

At this time Adam Clarke, known in later years as a classical and Oriental scholar and a Biblical commentator, was in vigorous youth, spreading Methodism in his native Ireland. In Dublin there was a revival, and consequent on it were some irregulari-

[1] Tyer. iii. 325, 347, 516, 520.

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ties, such as noisy prayer-meetings which lasted until midnight. Clarke wrote to his venerable leader in the City Road for guidance. The reply was full of interest. Courage and prudence were necessary to avoid the rocks on either hand. In the great revival in London, wrote Wesley, "my first difficulty was to bring into temper those who opposed the work; and my next to check and regulate the extravagances of those who promoted it." This letter was valuable for Clarke's immediate purpose, and, armed with this, he found himself able to put a stop to the "irregular and turbulent prayer-meetings."

The law requiring the taking out of licences for chapels and preachers for years gave rise to unpleasant disputes. Wesley was strongly opposed to their being licensed as Nonconformist, and it grieved him deeply when ill-natured magistrates taunted the Methodists with their neutral position, refusing that protection of law to which only avowed Dissenters were entitled. In 1790 Wesley wrote a touching letter to a bishop (whose name is not known), claiming for the Methodists some consideration. "Suffer these people to enjoy religious as well as civil liberty," wrote the aged man. He knew that to register his followers as Dissenters did not really make them such; yet he felt that to be so registered was to some extent a severance from the Church. The Act which caused all this annoyance was repealed in 1812, but too late to repair much of its mischief.

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Wesley was now feeble, for his natural force had abated. He was still able to take short journeys, and his sermons were almost as frequent as ever. To use his own graphic words, he crept about a little, and made shift to preach once a day. He even ventured on the somewhat rash step of preaching once again in the open air; and, strange to say, he felt revived by the effort. His voice was at this time almost gone, and although crowds assembled when he was announced as preacher, they came rather to see a famous veteran than with any expectation of understanding what he said.[1] With the full intention of "dying in harness," a programme was drawn up as usual, giving the details of an intended tour of inspection for the year 1791.

Those who were in daily intercourse with Wesley now saw plainly that he was—to use a common though hardly accurate phrase—"dying of old age." Dr. Whitehead, his medical adviser and friend, and the Rev. P. Dickenson, were much affected when they saw the languid and feeble state of the patriarch. Asked as to his plans, he only replied, "I know not at present how I shall proceed: we must follow the leadings of Providence in the best manner we can."[2] But reviving somewhat, he thought the usual journey might be undertaken; and his chaise and horses were actually sent on to Bristol. It was supposed that he would quickly follow in the stage-coach, and visit Bristol,

[1] H. Crabb Robinson's Diary, i. 20.

[2] Dickenson's Memoirs (1803).

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Gloucester, and Worcester—the latter city on the 22nd of March. During this month of February he wrote a few letters containing passages of interest. Animal magnetism—now called electro-biology—he described as "a device of Satan." The last letter written by him has often been printed. It was the remarkable letter to William Wilberforce, containing high praise of his noble efforts against negro slavery, and concluding with some words of affectionate solicitude.

Wesley was now visibly unwell, but he refused to see any physician but Dr. Whitehead. It was evident to all around him that his last hour was near. On the 1st of March, after a restless night, he was calm and hopeful: now, as frequently before, reciting one of his favourite hymns. He called for a pen, but was unable to write. "Let me write for you," said a friend. "What do you wish to say?" "Nothing, but that God is with us," he replied. Being again placed in his armchair, he uttered words of prayer and praise, then slept a while, and on awaking bade farewell to those around. On receiving from one of them some slight refreshment, he repeated his accustomed grace after meat, which ended thus: "Bless the Church and king, and grant us truth and peace for ever." During the night the power of speaking all but left him, still he was able to utter the word "farewell." And so at ten in the morning of the 2nd of March, 1791, he died in perfect peace. . . .

The funeral took place one week later, and in

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the mean time there was a ceremonial only to be described by the phrase "lying in state," when the noble features of the old man[1] were last seen by some thousands of his friends and followers. The funeral took place at an unusually early hour, for a scene of inconvenient crowding in the little cemetery was feared. The burial service was read by the Rev. John Richardson, who acted as one of his curates, and who, dying shortly afterwards, was laid in the same tomb with Wesley. Tyerman's biography, though extending to nigh two thousand pages, strange to say, omits mention of the funeral sermon, and of the memorial tablet in the City Road. Much significance there was in both of them. The funeral sermon was, by special request, preached by Dr. Whitehead, and it appears in his life of Wesley—the first, and in some respects the best, of the authentic biographies. Dr. Whitehead also wrote the epitaph for that marble tablet in the chancel of the New Chapel, which has been removed to make way for a tablet with the amended inscription. Another inscription appears on the tomb itself, which stands in the centre of the City Road Cemetery. Lastly, a marble tablet, bearing a well-executed group in relief, and also medallion portraits of John and Charles Wesley, has been fitly placed in the south aisle of Westminster Abbey.

[1] A powerful sketch of his features was now taken by Ridley, who was his friend and the illustrator of his magazine; and of this a copy was published in "Wesley's Place in Church History," 1870. See Appendix XIII., "Portraiture."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECESSION: 1791–1836.

THE reader who has followed the narrative of John Wesley's life and labours will now ask a question to which it is necessary to return some answer. He will inquire how it came to pass that Methodism became separated from the Church which Wesley loved, and finally took its place amongst the systems of Nonconformity. It is, in truth, not easy to explain exactly why, or when, Wesley's system ceased to be an auxiliary to that of the Church of England. The process was slow, as it arose from individual feeling and the tendencies of the system —all taking time for growth and development. There never has been, to this day, any decree or formal declaration of secession from the Church.[1] Yet the separation is practically as complete as though it had been formally resolved on, and carried out by distinct resolve and clear enactment. This singular fact cannot be explained without some reference to the events of nearly ninety years.

[1] Rigg, 103, 107.

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The early Methodists formed, as we have seen, an inner circle of devout people within the Anglican enclosure; and the evidence is abundant that his original plan, Wesley hoped and prayed, might be perpetual. Yet there were amongst his followers some who showed what would now be called Dissenting proclivities; and this was a source of anxiety from a very early date. Even in 1746 the tendency was apparent, and special efforts were made to retain the members of the society in their allegiance to the Church; and at Bristol the preachers, by way of giving a good example, attended service in St. James's Church every Wednesday and Friday.[1] How to get the members of the societies to attend church regularly? this was always the standing difficulty; and an effectual mode of meeting it was to induce the preachers to set them the example. Once at Normanby there was stationed a "well-meaning preacher," who neither advised the people to go to church, nor himself went there. He was "pressed for a soldier," and this strange event removed the difficulty; for, when he was marched away, the people went as before to church. A more troublesome disciple was McNab, who flamed out into anger because in Wesley's chapel at Bath there had been given to a clergyman that precedence which was given to the clergy in all the chapels. McNab "would not suffer the clergy to ride over his head," and the uproar was so serious that it had to be quieted by John and Charles Wesley in

[1] Tyer. i. 528.

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person. McNab, whose hasty and insubordinate spirit had before given trouble, was now on the point of being expelled; but Wesley, who was of a forgiving temper, relented, and received him again.

In 1751, "railing against the Church," then a specific and very grave offence, was brought home to two of the preachers. Wesley introduced some new and stringent rules of discipline, as he was resolved to put down that which he described as "the spirit of Ham, if not of Korah."[1] The difficulty became, however, so great that it amounted to a crisis in 1755–56, and it is so described in the annals. The special reasons why the danger of secession was greater now than at any other period appear to have been these: The clergy had in some places frowned upon many of their best parishioners and most regular communicants, merely because these were Methodists; and two of the foremost, because the most energetic and able, of the lay preachers had openly favoured the idea of secession. And not only had Walsh and Cownley raised for the time the anti-Church standard, but some other preachers of less note, encouraged by their example, were flocking around them. There were even instances of the latter taking on themselves to administer the sacraments. Charles Wesley felt this to be a crisis, and he urged on his brother the need for prompt and decided action. His warnings, and those of other friends, had their due effect; and John Wesley, though not so speedily as his

[1] Tyer. ii. 129.

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brother wished, set his face against the agitators. Peace was restored for a time; for, as Charles Wesley strongly phrased it, "Satan had done his worst." [1]

Walsh, the best of the preachers—the typical preacher of that day—set the example of patience and moderation to his fellows; and Wesley, whose mind was now firmly made up, praised him for his regard to the voice of reason and authority. In the letter which commended Walsh's conduct he drew, as he often drew, the distinction between exhortation and prayer, which was the function of evangelists or lay preachers, and the higher duties of what he described as "the sacerdotal office." This distinction again he drew, at greater length and more powerfully, many years later, in his famous sermon on the ministerial office. The question of secession was in 1755–56 much discussed in the Conference; and the end was that a kind of compromise was arrived at. The assembled preachers agreed that, whether secession were lawful or not—and on this point they were divided—it was not expedient. It is important to add that though Wesley sanctioned this *concordat*, he did not personally assent to the proposition that secession from the National Church was, under any amount of provocation, lawful. Whatever others might do, he dare not separate, believing that "it would be a sin so to do." [2]

In 1756 the question was reopened at the Con-

[1] Tyer. ii. 200–204. [2] Ibid. iii. 636.

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ference. Two or three preachers, now finding it in vain to struggle against the fixed opinion of their brethren on so momentous a point, left the connexion, going into avowed dissent. Edward Perronet, unworthy of his name, had printed some ribald rhymes against the Church: and this effusion Wesley exerted himself to suppress. The result of the discussions of this year was thus summed up by Wesley: "We largely considered the necessity of keeping in the Church, and using the clergy with tenderness, and there was no dissenting voice. God gave us all to be of one mind and of one judgment. My brother and I closed the Conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to be separate from the Church; and all our brethren concurred therein."

The difficulty pressing on his mind during these critical years was no slight one, and it rendered his action less decisive and speedy than Charles Wesley could have desired. It was explained by the poet in a letter to Walker of Truro. The preachers were for a time determined and threatening. Wesley could not make up his mind to part with them; and, on the other hand, he dare not secede from the Church. The only alternative was submission on their part; and this was gained, except in the case of a very few, who, being "of a froward, unhumbled spirit," had left them. The crisis of 1755–56 was clearly, therefore, brought on by a small fraction of the whole body; and when it subsided there was peace, which lasted for many years.

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In 1758 John Wesley's promised essay against separation appeared. It gave concisely twelve reasons for not seceding from the Church. Especially cogent was the twelfth: To separate would be to act in direct opposition to the very end for which Methodism had been raised up by Providence.

In 1761 Wesley wrote that, not from choice but from necessity, he had varied in some particulars from the system of the Church; and he used a new argument in defence of his own isolated position. He had, he said, been ordained not for any cure, but as a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, which had been founded, as appeared by its statutes, for the spread generally of the Christian faith. Something was done at the Conference of that year to secure the Methodists in their allegiance to the Church; but as no minutes are forthcoming of what then took place, the nature of the steps then taken cannot be ascertained.

In 1763 appeared the "Larger Minutes," containing amongst the questions and answers on discipline and regulation of the growing societies the following:—"Are we not unawares by little and little tending to a separation from the Church? Oh, remove every tendency thereto. . . . Let all our preachers go to church. . . . Let all our people go constantly. . . . Receive the Sacrament at every opportunity. . . . Warn them [the people] against calling our society a Church, or the preachers ministers."

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In 1766 Wesley, while in the West Riding, visited Haworth; but his beloved friend Grimshaw was there no longer. "The communicants alone filled the church." Yet here, as at Bingley, he found that heresy had crept in; and this he deemed the sure result, unless his people adhered more firmly to the Church.[1] The Conference was held at Leeds, when it was again solemnly resolved not only to remain in the Church, but "to do nothing willingly which tends to a separation." Stricter discipline over the preachers was enforced; and amongst the searching questions drawn up for probationers was this: "Do you constantly attend the church and sacraments?"

Thus did the Methodists resolve, after much consideration; and for twenty years the question was hardly ever raised. If it was ever referred to, it was as a question not open, but decisively settled. Even the preachers had agreed to "abide by the old plan." "I advise all our friends to keep to the Church," wrote Wesley in 1778. "God has surely raised us up for the Church chiefly, that a little leaven may leaven the whole lump." It may be asked whether Wesley's friends were all as blind as himself to the helpless drifting of his system towards Nonconformity. We have seen that his chosen ally, Mr. Grimshaw, had foretold the result. Mr. Hey, a medical man of the highest repute at Leeds, was so impressed with a sense of coming secession, that he ventured to warn the Conference

[1] Tyer. ii. 573.

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of 1781; and when his warnings were received with impatience, he felt it a duty to withdraw from a body which, as he foresaw, would soon sever itself from Catholic unity.[1] Wesley himself continued firm. The pilot's hand was at the helm, which was directed Churchward, though the ship was carried by currents in an opposite direction. In the year 1785 he said, "I openly declared in the evening [to his society at Bristol] that I had no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago."

In the following year troubles arose at Deptford, where services were demanded in the chapel during church hours. Wesley replied that this was not only inexpedient, but wholly unlawful. For a time there was much irritation at Deptford—probably elsewhere also; but it was seen to be useless to attempt to shake Wesley's resolve, while those who were "Nonconformist at heart" felt that the day was not far distant when they might renew the agitation with much better chance of success. Towards his last days, Wesley wrote and spoke more strongly, if possible, on the point; and there was need so to do, for Dr. Coke's tendencies towards secession became more dangerous as his influence in Methodism increased. Wesley had been compelled to interfere with a strong hand in Dublin, where Sunday services had been held in open rivalry with those of the Church. For these Dr. Coke was responsible. He had returned from America with

[1] Tyer. ii. 364.

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stronger Dissenting tendencies than before. His utterances in the Conference of 1786 were such that poor Charles Wesley, on the verge of the grave, and no longer able to do battle for the Church against superior numbers, could only answer with a cry of "No." John Wesley, however, held to his fixed course, and refused to sanction a new departure, so that Dr. Coke was discomfited for the time. Of the result of this Conference Charles Wesley wrote to a friend in graphic and familiar style, as follows:—

"My brother, and I, and the preachers were unanimous for continuing in the old ship. The preachers of a Dissenting spirit will probably, after our death, set up for themselves, and draw away disciples after them. An old Baptist minister, forty years ago, told me he looked on the Methodists as a seminary for the Dissenters. Their desire and design, from the beginning to this day, is, to leave them in the lap of their mother. The bishops might, if they pleased, save the largest and soundest part of them back into the Church; perhaps to leaven the whole lump, as Archbishop Potter said to me. But I fear, betwixt you and me, their lordships care for none of these things. The great evil which I have dreaded for nearly fifty years, is a schism."

A letter written at this time by one who knew all the actors in the scene contained this passage: "The preachers in general have agreed to abide by the old plan. I sincerely pity Dr. Coke, but I really believe good will be brought out of evil." There was, however, a concession of some importance, which Charles

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Wesley in vain opposed. Services were now allowed to be held during church hours in some places, under fixed and special conditions. They were allowed where the parish minister was notoriously wicked or heretical, or where, from distance or want of church accommodation, there was evident necessity for the irregular service. Such service was to include the psalms and lessons, and part of the Church prayers.[1] Wesley allowed of this unwillingly, nor would he afterwards admit that any benefit resulted from it. At Dorking—and not only there—he observed that Methodism had profited nothing by having service in church hours.[2]

Shortly afterwards occurred the death of the venerable man; and the opportunity came, to which many had looked forward, of making grave changes. His chosen friends had died before him, nor did his mantle fall on any successor. It is remarkable that the first president of the Conference after the death of the founder should be a Mr. Thompson, as to whom the annals are nearly silent. There were some active spirits to whom the idea of secession was familiar—such as Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Taylor, Moore, and Pawson, all of whom had a firm belief in Wesley's power to ordain ministers, and so institute a new Christian Church. Attached to two or three of the chapels there were regular clergymen: but their influence was declining, and as one by one they disappeared, their places were filled by no successors.

[1] Tyer. iii. 478. [2] Ibid. 488, 514, 543, 550.

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Looking at the societies at large, it is easy to discern that there was a large and growing section who were in favour of services, sacramental and otherwise, by the preachers during church hours; while the majority were at that moment well inclined to adhere to original Methodism. It is fair to refer again to the important fact that Methodists had often been compelled by the Justice Shallows and Slenders of the day to register themselves as Dissenters; and it necessarily followed from this that with many of them, especially in the larger towns, the tie remaining between them and the Church was slight.

Such were the elements, somewhat discordant, which were found active through Methodism at the death of the founder. For four years there was some conflict and much uncertainty. There was, in truth, a strongly conservative Church party; and there was an equally strong, but more active and determined, anti-Church party. Foremost amongst the ranks of the former was Dr. Whitehead, Wesley's intimate friend and first biographer. He was in possession of his deceased leader's Journals and papers, and for a time was the representative of old Methodist traditions. He had been invited to preach the funeral sermon of Wesley, and to write his epitaph—facts which outweigh all depreciatory remarks which the preachers soon acquired the habit of using at his expense. For his part, he regarded himself as their equal, although a local preacher; and it may be that he gratified himself,

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while he annoyed them, when he described them as "lay preachers" on the memorial tablet in the New Chapel. Dr. Whitehead did not stand alone; for many laymen of high repute and long experience in Methodism, like him, feared the growing ambition of the preachers, and were anxious to abide in the old paths. They, like him, had been on terms of intimacy with the founder; and they deemed it due to his memory to obey the solemn warnings which were still fresh in their minds.

The struggle, which lasted for three years, between those who wished to uphold and those who endeavoured to change the old relations between Methodism and the Church, cannot here be traced out. Nor would the task be an easy one, for the dispute, according to high authority, is "among the obscurest passages in Methodist history." Perhaps the best evidence of its nature is afforded by an address to the Conference of 1793, drawn up and circulated by the trustees of the principal chapels in London and Bristol. Of this important document a few passages must be given. It recounts Wesley's attempts to prevent secession, and his last appeal of April, 1790. It states that though Wesley, by dint of importunity, in old age, had been prevailed on to ordain *a few preachers for America and Scotland*, he never intended further action of this kind; and that the societies chiefly consisted of Churchmen, while the liberty to all of following their own modes of worship had been the characteristic feature and peculiar glory of the

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system. Therefore it was impossible to "encourage or support those preachers who promote the new plan of ordination." This would subvert the original constitution, and would directly oppose "that economy which we have hitherto been taught to consider as the order of Providence."

The address then proceeds: "The minutes of our Conference, the rules of our societies, and the [trust] deeds of our [preaching] houses, all concur in one testimony, namely, that the Methodists are no distinct or separate party, and the preachers are there described as only 'preachers and expounders of God's holy Word.' And though their primary and avowed call was and is to the Church of England, yet they held out the right hand of friendship and brotherly love to all. . . . In short, if the present goodly fabric of Methodism has been raised under the peculiar direction of Providence, we cannot conceive that any man, or body of men, have a right to pull down the building, lay a new foundation, and raise another structure with the old materials. Let those who do not like the old building quit, and build a new one for themselves. If they will not do this voluntarily, but continue to disturb and annoy the peaceable inhabitants, we entreat you to unite with us in endeavouring to defend and preserve the same as complete and entire as possible.

"The attempts that have been lately made to introduce the Ordination scheme have produced many and great evils in various places, and if

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persisted in must divide the people, and in the end destroy the cause.

"We therefore stand forward, as trustees of two of the principal societies in the kingdom, to declare our intention of abiding by and supporting the original Methodist plan."

The address then refers to certain persons as "troublers of our Israel," and calls on the brethren throughout the empire to resist them.

This was signed by the London and Bristol trustees, who were amongst the most influential and best-informed of the Methodists of that day. Amongst the more noteworthy signatures were those of Mr. Wolley,[1] and of Messrs. Horton and Wolff, who both were named as executors in Wesley's will. Others were the signatures of men equally estimable, though less prominent in the annals. One name, however, had a special significance. It was that of Mr. Clulow, who for years had been Wesley's friend and confidential adviser in legal matters. No one living knew so well the objects kept in view by Wesley in framing his connexional polity, the ends which he sought to attain, and those which he strove to avoid.

Let us glance briefly at the legal arrangements which had placed Methodism, with its large corporate property in buildings, on a permanent basis. The trusts of the chapels and other premises belonging to the societies throughout the kingdom

[1] His monument is in the place of honour, close to those of the Wesleys at City Road.

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were not exactly uniform from the outset. Yet it is sufficiently accurate to state that all this large and rapidly increasing property was vested in trustees, who, in each instance, were bound to hold the property for such purposes as John and Charles Wesley (or the survivor of them) should direct. Personally, the brothers held none of the lands or buildings, yet to them was reserved an absolute control; and when they did not themselves occupy or use the structures, they had the legal right of nominating the clergymen, or other persons, who should from time to time officiate in the chapels or reside in the houses.

Some years after the annual Conference had become an institution, it occurred to Wesley that on that body might fitly devolve, in the times to come, the supreme direction and the legal rights of patronage. In 1769 this idea developed into a sketch of the Conference as one "united group accustomed to act in concert," and therefore well fitted to succeed the author and autocrat of Methodism. There was, however, no legal definition of the Conference. It was a somewhat informal body, consisting of a fluctuating number of preachers, with a few clergymen, and fewer laymen; in short, of such persons as Wesley chose to invite from time to time to meet him for counsel and for mutual help. His extraordinary power of organizing had full scope when, in 1784, he devised, with his legal friend, Mr. Clulow, a permanent body of one hundred persons, in whom, after his death, all

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legal powers should centre. Most lawyers would have recommended the cumbrous and costly machinery of a private Act of Parliament; but Mr. Clulow, aided by the advice of Mr. Madocks, a Chancery barrister, saw his way to the settlement of a great difficulty and the consolidation of a great scheme, by an expedient of masterly simplicity. This was a short deed of declaration, which was put on record, 9th March, 1784, in the Chancery enrolment office. It gave the names of John and Charles Wesley, and of two other clergymen (Coke and Creighton), and of ninety-six gentlemen, further described as "preachers and expounders" of the Gospel, who were to meet under fixed conditions every year, under the care and in connection with the said John Wesley, keeping up as a first duty their number of one hundred by co-option. This body so made perpetual, under the legal style of "Yearly Conference of the people called Methodists," succeeded Wesley in the general direction and legal control of the entire system. They have always met and fulfilled all their legal functions; and of courtesy, though not of right, they have always admitted a large number of other preachers to their deliberations. They have lately consented to admit representative laymen also. The assembly is therefore, in practice, a large one, and its discussions have a wide range. But to the eye of the lawyer the Conference is still the select annual gathering of one hundred governors or patrons, who exercise the chief control over the corporate interests and possessions of Methodism in England.

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But no title-deed of Methodism prescribes or even contemplates secession from the National Church, the entire machinery being so ingeniously framed as to admit of conformity. Charles Wesley hoped and believed that the Conference would find a recognized place, sooner or later, within the Church of England. He knew that the Franciscans, Augustinians, and other orders were governed by their own rules, and held their separate property, all within the wide enclosure of the Church of Rome. If John Wesley spoke less of ultimate reunion, it was not that he differed in opinion from his brother. He was by nature more apt to bend his thoughts on the immediate work under his hand, and to leave the outcome to Providence. By constitution the reverse of dreamy or speculative, he simply worked while it was day, without anxiety as to the future. For the future he did nevertheless provide in this effective manner, the high credit of which he ascribed to Mr. Clulow. This was by no means the only, though it was the chief, obligation which Methodism owed to this excellent lawyer. And finding his name attached, with that of Wesley's executors and other most intimate lay friends, to the trustees' address of 1793, posterity will recognize in that document the voice of the best and truest friends of original Methodism—of the Methodism which revived religion in the last century.

As to the reception of this address by those to whom it was sent, no account has reached us.

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Probably some of the trustees of other chapels, finding that no technical breach of trust was threatened, did not respond to the appeal. The Conference did, in fact, disclaim any plan of general ordination of preachers. Unquestionably it was within its legal powers when, after much hesitation, it resolved on a course which was a turning point in Methodistic history.

In 1795 the Conference, though giving up what the trustees of 1793 described as "the Ordination scheme," took a course which was wholly in the same direction. As implied by the name of "plan of pacification," it was designed to quiet down complaints and anxieties on all sides. It was now finally ruled and resolved by the Conference, that in any place where the members of the society, in a formal and prescribed way, should signify their wish to have sacramental services by their own preachers, that this concession should be made. As a fact, this wish has been everywhere signified; and consequently the preachers in time were found, not preaching and expounding merely, but discharging all the other duties which pertain to the ministerial office. This is (as we are told on good authority) the only separation from the Church which has ever taken place. In theory, therefore, any Methodist is as free as were his predecessors in Wesley's time to regard the society as a devotional guild or association, and to resort to his parish church on the Sunday morning as his forefathers did. In practice, the Methodist preachers act as the ministers

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of a separate and a duly authorized Christian Church; and this with the approval and support of their people.

The process of separation was not rapid, for it went on through fifty years; and in its early stages the inevitable result was not apparent to all. Even after the momentous decision of the Conference in 1795, there were Methodists who, in perfect good faith, maintained that there was, on their part, no secession from the Church.[1] In the diocese of Lincoln, many of the clergy bestowed much thought on what they deemed to be the anomalous position of their Methodist parishioners: Were they Churchmen, or were they Dissenters? Rightly or wrongly, the opinion of many of the clergy was that the tendency was to draw people away from the Church. This conclusion they made public, thereby grieving the minds of the conservatively inclined amongst the Methodists. Mr. Benson, one of the most eminent of the preachers of his day, wrote and published a very able reply, disclaiming any such tendency, and describing the Methodists as consistent Church-people.[2] Of his sincerity there can be no question; and the only possible explanation is that Mr. Benson, himself fond of the old paths and not far seeing, was not alive to the fact that the whole connexion was fast drifting away from the Church. Perhaps Mr. Benson was the last of the eminent members of his own order to whom secession

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1797, p. 314.

[2] *Eccles. Gazette*, 1879, p. 152. "A Vindication of the People called Methodists." London, 1800.

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from the Church seemed something distant, undesirable, and to be avoided. Year by year his brethren were regarded by others, and came to regard themselves, as the ministers of a new and distinct Christian Church. And this change of attitude no doubt led, amongst other things, to the withdrawal, about the year 1820, of the original monument in the City Road, and the substitution of that in which the term "lay preachers" does not appear.

When Mr. Watson wrote his Life of Wesley, the separation from the Church, although rapidly proceeding, was by no means complete. He stated, in 1831, that the societies even then included many Churchmen; he might have added that most of the Methodist families still kept up the traditional connexion for sacramental and for some other purposes. When the law of marriage was so altered as to allow of the performance of that solemnity elsewhere than in a church, many of the Methodists, and even some of the preachers, refused to avail themselves of a privilege which they spoke of in scornful terms. Yet it was inevitable that the few remaining links should one by one be severed. The present generation of Methodists is the first which may accurately be said to hold completely aloof from the National Church.

So much for the present attitude of English Methodism towards the Church. Any further description of it would be apart from our present task; and it is better that the reader should, from the facts coming within his daily range of vision, form

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American channel, from Dr. Coke, and mediately from Wesley himself.

English Methodism, which has seen some vicissitudes in modern times, is now peaceable and flourishing. Immense sums have been of late years expended on chapels, and on educational institutions of all kinds. Especially may the foreign missions be mentioned as constituting the chief glory of the system, and as showing that the zeal and liberality of its adherents are not diminished. As regards numbers, Methodism in England is stationary; in fact, it fails to hold its position when the annual increase of the population is considered.[1]

This is not the place for discussing the various suggestions which have been made for a corporate reunion between the British followers of Wesley and that Church which he loved, and from which nothing could induce him to sever. Those who have made such proposals have most properly taken for granted that the Methodists must, in any case, be invited to bring in with them their separate rules and usages, so as to remain a separate order within the Anglican pale. The first man of note who studied with critical attention the peculiar history and the modern position of Methodism, was the poet-laureate, Dr. Southey. Half a century has now passed away since that eminent and learned writer sketched out, in few but distinct phrases, a

[1] "It is not an uncommon complaint of Methodists to-day that their children, when they grow up, migrate into the Church." —Rigg, 14. See Appendix XIV., "Statistics."

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possible reunion in the well-known words with which he closed his Life of Wesley:—

"Nor is it beyond the bounds of reasonable hope that, conforming itself to the original intention of its founders, it may again draw towards the establishment from which it has seceded . . . the obstacles to this are surely not insuperable, perhaps not so difficult as they may appear. And were this effected, John Wesley would then be ranked, not only amongst the most remarkable and influential men of his age, but among the great benefactors of his country and kind."

In days when supernatural religion has many and powerful enemies, and when Roman Catholicism is striving to recover lost ground, there is a growing belief amongst Churchmen that the separate existence of the Methodists as a body of Nonconformists is a misfortune to English Christianity. There is, at the present time, much anxiety to discover the true reasons why Wesley's followers should hold aloof from the National Church. Many of the reasons alleged are found to be in reality weak and inconclusive. Perhaps the more weighty of them may be summed up thus: Methodists themselves do not manifest any strong desire to return; and their ministers could not do so without open avowal of an opinion, or acceptance of a theory, on the question of ordination which they do not hold.

In other words, Unity is not at present valued; while no slur can be allowed to be cast on the ministerial claims of the present race of preachers. These

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are serious obstacles, no doubt, and are felt to be such even by those who refuse to regard them as hopeless and irremovable.

The first difficulty will wane and disappear when it shall please Divine Providence to open the eyes of good men to the importance of organic union amongst Christians. Perhaps increased trials and difficulties, which shall in the latter days surround and threaten the faith and its upholders, may one day cause a drawing together in sympathy amongst such as hold to the Christian creeds. Perhaps Judah may cease from vexing Ephraim, and Ephraim from envying Judah; and restored good will and a full sense of brotherhood may quickly draw together in heart those who never ought to have been separated. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons.

If the disposition for Unity shall exist, the other obstacles will appear small, and readily to be moved away. The submission to the Anglican form of ordination will then as a difficulty block the path no longer. When He, who needed no baptism from the hand of any man, desired to comply with an ancient rule,[1] saying, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," He spoke along the centuries to all who deem but lightly of forms and ceremonies, and to all who are ruled by that feeling which by some is called pride, and by others self-respect. To enter more minutely into questions such as these would now be premature.

But so surely as the gloom changes into day, and

[1] St. Matt. iii. 15.

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as harsh winter softens into genial spring, there shall come over Christendom a longing for Unity, when all the apparent difficulties, now large and lowering, will dwindle and vanish. Knowing that only the Divine Power can accomplish this, and that human efforts are unavailing towards so transcendent a purpose, "He that believeth shall not make haste."

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The following are the books and editions most frequently referred to throughout these pages:—

Life of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., etc., copied chiefly from a London edition published by John Whitehead, M.D. 2 vols. Dublin, 1805–1806.

Life of Wesley, by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore. Reprinted at Derby, 1843.

Life of Wesley, by Robert Southey (with Coleridge's notes). 2 vols. London, 1864.

Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., by Richard Watson. Eleventh edition. (No date; the first edition appears to have been in 1831.)

Memoirs of the Rev. C. Wesley, M.A. (abridged from the larger work), by Thomas Jackson. Third edition. London, 1862.

Wesley's Journals. 4 vols. Conference Office, London, 1864.

John Wesley's Place in Church History determined, etc., by R. Denny Urlin. London, 1870.

John Wesley and Modern Methodism, by F. Hockin, Rector of Phillack. Third edition. London (no date).

The Churchmanship of John Wesley, and the Relations, etc., by James H. Rigg, D.D. London (no date, but published in 1879).

The Life and Times of Wesley, by Rev. L. Tyerman. 3 vols. London, Hodder and Co., edition of 1878.

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APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

THE BIOGRAPHERS.

THE first biographer of Wesley was Mr. Hampson, Junior, son of the John Hampson who had for many years been one of Wesley's trusted preachers, and sometimes his secretary and travelling companion. Father and son together left the connexion about the year 1785, under the circumstances briefly stated at p. 143, deeming themselves slighted and injured by their exclusion from the first legal conference. Mr. Hampson, Senior, continued, however, to receive from his former brethren a small pension; while his son obtained holy orders, was appointed to an incumbency at Sunderland, and wrote a Life of Wesley, which must have been begun, if not nearly completed, when the patriarch died. It was published at Sunderland in 1791, in three small volumes, and cannot be said to possess any distinct value, as the author had no original documents in his hands. This work is rarely met with, and is not likely to be reprinted, as the very

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few passages of importance to be found in it have been transcribed by later and more careful writers.

Wesley's will contained the following: "I give all my MSS. to Thomas Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burnt or published as they see good." Dr. Coke was absent on a mission journey to America when Wesley died, and all the MSS. were at once handed over to Dr. Whitehead, who was requested to write the authorized Life of the Founder of Methodism. There was some delay about this, partly owing to the bankruptcy of the printer who was first employed, and partly, it may well be supposed, to a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with its author on the part of the preachers, which made itself apparent very quickly.

Whitehead's Life of Wesley appeared at last in two vols. 8vo, and it was soon understood that Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore were so little contented with the labours of their colleague, that they resolved on themselves writing a biography. They were, however, met by the difficulty that all the MSS. had been entrusted to Dr. Whitehead, and were then in his hands; and they were therefore compelled to write their own book as best they could, without access to any original papers, but availing themselves of much that had appeared in Dr. Whitehead's volumes.

Dr. Whitehead's biography must always hold a high place as an authority, the advantages enjoyed by its author being considered; yet it will disappoint any reader. It is one which any mere book-maker,

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furnished with materials and without personal knowledge of Wesley, might as well have produced. Page after page is filled with the author's dull discussion of points of theology, while he has failed by graphic touches or reminiscences to impart any living interest to his work.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, like Dr. Whitehead, had been closely intimate with Wesley in his old age, and from their own recollections they were well able to make up, to some extent at least, for the absence of all the MSS. As a literary performance, their book is hardly on a higher level than that of their rival; and, like his, their book cannot be said to merit republication.

Fortunately for the world of intelligent readers, some accident, or perchance the request of a publisher, turned the attention of Dr. Robert Southey towards the same theme a quarter of a century later. Evidently it was easy to object that Southey had no special aptitude for the task and no fresh sources of information. He compiled a Life of Wesley for the general reader, as he had compiled a "Life of Nelson." But the founder of a religious system is not so easily portrayed as a victorious admiral. Southey's theory of Methodism was hastily formed, on few and superficial data. Starting with the idea that Wesley, with all his virtues, was an enthusiast, with an ambition to form a great religious sect, Southey allowed this inadequate and erroneous idea to tinge all his narrative. Thus he laid himself open to the free and

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friendly rebukes administered by his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and printed in the notes which appear in the later editions of the book. He also laid himself open to the still sharper criticism of a less distinguished critic, who summed up his opinion of the laureate's fitness for his task in the significant words, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

So much for the defects of Southey's biography—one of the most justly popular biographies known to English readers.

Its merits are such as to be at once evident to all. The clear, bright, sympathetic spirit of the amiable writer is impressed on every chapter of a book which alone makes good the claim of Southey to rank amongst the first of prose writers, whatever place may finally be assigned to him as a poet. By a wide circle of cultivated and thoughtful readers of the time, Southey's book was hailed as a permanent addition to the small list of standard English biographies.

Half a century has now passed by, and Southey's Life still holds its place as a deeply interesting, and on the whole a trustworthy book. A more careful examination of its pages, after an interval of years, has convinced the present writer of its surpassing merit. New controversies have arisen which Southey could hardly foresee; yet, considering the time at which it was written, and the materials which its author had at his command, it is simply wonderful that so full, so graphic, so well-informed

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and so accurate a Life of Wesley could have been written by a professional writer of books in the reign of the Fourth George.

Amongst those who were keenly alive to the few defects of Southey's book, and who were insensible to its many merits, was Mr. Moore. He has already been mentioned as a follower of Wesley, well known and trusted, living in the house, and finally charged by his venerable "friend and patron" with the joint possession of all his manuscripts.

Mr. Moore was the last survivor of the three literary executors of Wesley; and, obtaining possession of the MSS., he deemed it expedient to attempt another biography. It appears that the recent publication of Southey's admirable work was the inciting cause. Still Mr. Moore was one who had an indisputable claim to place before the public his own account of the friend and leader of his early years.

One defect to be noted in Mr. Moore's book is a bitter and unreasoning dislike to Southey. That admirable man, whose whole life was such as to defy detraction and command esteem of the highest kind, Mr. Moore thought fit to vilify. He went so far as to impute infidelity to one of the most consistent and orthodox of Christians. Perhaps it was by reason of this transparent error, and of other errors of taste, that Mr. Moore's Life of Wesley failed to attract much notice, and is now forgotten. Even the Methodists of the period, for whom it was written, so little esteemed it, that by their general

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desire a new Life of Wesley, from their own—modern Wesleyan—point of view, was undertaken very few years later by Richard Watson, one of the most eminent of the Wesleyan ministers of his day. Mr. Watson deservedly occupied a foremost place in Methodism. His writings on abstruse questions are still highly esteemed by many of those who have sounded the depths of the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy. Watson had access to all the connexional archives; and he is understood to have written his Life of Wesley at the request of his brethren, who were dissatisfied with Southey's portraiture of their founder, and required a concise and popular book, written from their own point of view, which they could place in the hands of young and old in their societies. The separation of Methodism from the Church was at that time by no means complete; and the tone of Mr. Watson's remarks where they concern the Church is notably more deferential, not to say apologetic, than that of more recent Wesleyan writers. As may be expected, he enters into an elaborate justification of the secession so far as it had gone. Otherwise his book, which may be described as a clearly written and very concise epitome of Wesley's printed journals, touches little on any of those momentous points which have, since the year 1831, come up prominently to the surface.

A long interval followed, during which the Wesleyans were content with Watson's concise account of their founder, while Southey's more

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entertaining book amply sufficed for the reading public.

In course of years, however, new questions arose, and the claims of the Anglican Church were presented in a new light. There was a revived interest in the history of the early centuries; and earnest-minded persons began to ask the real meaning of these words of the Creed—"One Catholic and Apostolic Church." The history of the last century and of that revival of religion, in which the Wesleys and Whitefield took active parts, began to be minutely inquired into. The existing books were found to be almost silent on some points of high interest; and students groped their way through magazines, journals, sermons, and scattered writings in frequent wonder that notable passages had not received the slightest attention on the part of the biographers of Wesley. Yet for several years no noteworthy attempt was made to throw further light on the history of Methodism and of its founder. Those who were called by the name of Wesley were satisfied with Mr. Watson's concise sketch—excellent so far as it went, but inadequate considering the changed aspect of the times and the nature of the newly opened controversies. Anglican students found that Southey gave them little information on some points of high interest; and they found themselves now and then corroborated, in a manner quite unexpected and startling, when they happened to turn to Wesley's own journals and sermons, even in imperfect editions. This was the position of things for a long space of time.

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About the year 1870 a new Life of Wesley appeared, from the pen of Miss Wedgwood. The literary merits of this modest volume were at once evident; but, commenced on too large a scale, the later chapters were scanty and contracted. No previous writer had examined the Wesleyan history with greater capacity, and with equal breadth of view. Notwithstanding the singular excellence of the early chapters, where a fine appreciation and a thoughtful insight were apparent, Miss Wedgwood's book was judged to resemble rather a *torso*, or an incomplete sketch, than a duly proportioned and a well-finished work of art.

About the same time (1870) there appeared several independent essays and sketches of more or less value, dealing with questions in dispute between Wesleyans and Churchmen. As these did not claim the dignity attaching to biographies, they are briefly described in Appendix II. In addition to the books above referred to there are some others, less thoroughly known to the present writer, and for which therefore a bare enumeration must suffice. Mr. G. Smith and Dr. Stevens, an American, have written at length on Wesley and Methodism; and the life of the excellent Charles Wesley has been fully set forth by the late Rev. T. Jackson.

One biography only remains to be noticed—that by the Rev. L. Tyerman, a living Wesleyan minister. Its three large volumes, comprising nearly 2000 closely printed pages, bear evidence to the loving and laborious efforts of many years. Of a book

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so recent and so well-known, it would be superfluous to give any lengthened notice; and this is not the place for critical remarks. Yet as these pages will meet the eyes of many persons who have not seen, and may never see, the portly volumes of Tyerman, a very few lines of description may properly be added.

Tyerman's Life of Wesley is by very much the most full and complete biography which has ever appeared. It is on a scale so comprehensive as to make it inevitable that every biographer coming after Tyerman must be largely indebted to his untiring industry and his wide research. Hundreds of letters hitherto unpublished have been obtained from various quarters, and all possible exertions have evidently been made to render the work complete and exhaustive.

Even an unfriendly critic could find but little fault with such a book. A few singular omissions: an error of taste now and then: a tendency to discursive remark: some readiness of the author (occasionally shown—not always) to ignore one set of facts, and to keep his attention alive to another set of facts:—these, if all told, form a not very serious indictment where some two thousand octavo pages of careful, industrious, and, on the whole, candid narrative come up for judgment. This comprehensive work, therefore, in spite of many blemishes, confers infinite credit on its author, while it throws a flood of light on the history and the motives of the illustrious man of whom he has written.

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APPENDIX II.

SOME RECENT ESSAYS.

It has been mentioned that the years 1869–70 saw a marked revival of interest in all that relates to old Methodistic history. The valuable contribution of Miss Wedgwood to literature of this class, written from the broad-church point of view, was almost simultaneous with the publication of some other books less elaborate, and not claiming to rank amongst the biographies. Some of these were avowedly written from the Anglican point of view: and all of them entered largely into the questions which had sprung into notice since the days of Southey and Watson.

"Wesley in Company with High Churchmen," by the Rev. H. W. Holden, a Yorkshire curate, attracted much attention from its novelty of plan and the boldness and ingenuity with which the plan was carried out. Although but a small volume, it was compactly filled, and arranged with much system, bringing together, as it were into a focus, all the evidence (and the amount of this

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was to all readers surprising) to show that Wesley had anticipated some eminent churchmen of this century in the revival of what is called Sacramentalism and ritualism. Mr. Holden did not, however, stay to inquire, perhaps considering it no part of his task to do so, into the points in which the Wesleys differed from the Puseys and Kebles of a later period.

While Mr. Holden was with much industry making his notes from voluminous sources of information, the present writer happened to be engaged in an inquiry not undertaken with the same object in view, although there was found to be a general similarity in many of the results arrived at.

"John Wesley's Place in Church History," which appeared in 1870, contained the results of a somewhat careful inquiry into the origin of the various distinguishing features of Methodism, and into the relations which that system originally held, and was designed to hold, towards the Church of England. Some of the documentary evidence set forth in its pages was altogether new, while all of it was examined with a genuine desire to arrive at the truth. It was gratifying to find that even such authorities as the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* did not complain of the tone and temper of the essay. The little work, as its title implied, did not profess to be a life of Wesley; while it was addressed rather to a special class of students than to the general public. Consisting mainly of argument

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on points of history and theology, such a book was not likely to become popularly known; and as it is out of print, friendly suggestions have led the writer to recast it, omitting many pages of mere disquisition, and expanding the narrative. With many changes and additions, the volume now submitted to the reader may therefore be looked upon as a new and enlarged edition of "John Wesley's Place in Church History."

About the year 1868 a magazine article by Dr. J. H. Rigg, "On the Relations of Wesley and Methodism to the Church," had been expanded by him into an essay. Dr. Rigg professed to handle his subject with "rare advantages." One of them appeared to be a rare sense of freedom in the use of epithets, such as "semi-popish," "bigoted and ritualistic," etc. In this essay there was such a skilful disposition of light and shade as made John Wesley to appear in the new character of a lax and half-hearted Anglican, whose scheme of life was to originate and point the way to a great secession. This incomplete and misleading sketch, by the criticisms which it drew forth, gave a great impetus to the exploration of Wesley's own writings. It was soon found that himself had, as though in anticipation, provided the answer; and all that was really necessary was to reprint a variety of passages from his own Journals and Sermons. Many tracts have appeared, consisting partly or wholly of excerpts, made more or less carefully as regards context, etc., from Wesley's works

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—perhaps none of them proving more successful than the repeated editions of a simple tract entitled "Pastoral Advice of the Rev. J. Wesley." This tract (by an anonymous compiler) did not contain a single line from any other pen than that of Wesley.

These extracts concluded with the following analysis of Wesley's "Pastoral Advice":—

"The Rev. JOHN WESLEY was a Churchman from conviction (No. 36), felt it his duty to remain in the Church (No. 4), and frequently expressed his determination to do so (Nos. 12, 39, 51, 52, 56).

"Charged the Methodists not to leave the Church (Nos. 3, 9, 31, 34, 47, 56), even though they thought their minister's life or doctrine was bad (Nos. 14, 19, 20).

"Required the Society to attend church constantly, and to receive the Holy Communion there (Nos. 1, 5, 17, 25), and urged them to do so even if they did not esteem their minister (Nos. 14, 20, 45).

"Spoke from his own experience (No. 6) and that of another (No. 7) of the great blessing obtained in going to church, and described the loss which he said some persons had sustained by not doing so (No. 23).

"Would not let the Methodists hold their meetings in church hours, as he CONSIDERED THAT THIS WOULD BE A FORMAL SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH (Nos. 41, 43), showed how experience proved that the adoption of this course would not benefit the Society (No. 44), enforced his rule on this point as strictly as he could (No. 49), and was careful to follow it himself (Nos. 34, 50).

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"Took steps to prevent separation from the Church (title-page, Nos. 8, 10, 13, 18, 49).

"Reported the decisions of eight 'Conferences' in favour of continuing in the Church (Nos. 12, 14, 32, 35, 40, 46, 53, 54), and with regard to each of them said, or implied, that the decision was unanimous.

"When he was dying, and just before he 'changed for death,' expressed strongly his wish that no change should be made in the condition of affairs; and, in almost his last words, prayed for God's blessing on the Church (No. 57)."

Dr. Rigg's second edition the present writer has not been able to meet with—even in the British Museum. The third edition appeared in the shape of a neat volume early in 1879. At the end is a "list of books and pamphlets" relating to the subject; and, incredible as it may appear, from this list are omitted not only all the recent books written by Churchmen, but even Tyerman's most valuable work. In this third edition by Dr. Rigg there are some modifications of view and of language. For example, Wesley is no longer presented as having "thrown overboard the last of his High Church leanings," in 1746, or in any other year.

Shortly afterwards appeared Mr. Hockin's essay on "Wesley and Modern Methodism."

In the series entitled "The Church's broken Unity," edited by the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, there appeared a carefully-written sketch of Wesley and

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Methodism. This closes with an account of the various secessions or off-shoots from the Connexion —information which it is by no means easy to meet with in a concise form elsewhere.

Another pamphlet which attracted much attention about the same time was a letter on "The Church and Wesleyanism," by the Rev. P. G. Medd, of University Coll., Oxford. While upholding the claims of his own Church, Mr. Medd admits that the separation which he deplores was caused by Anglican neglect a century ago; and of Methodism he speaks in the language of cordial and thorough esteem. If Mr. Medd falls into any error it is the praiseworthy one of freely attributing to other minds that longing after a realized and visible unity which pervades his own. He describes the sense of a "need of reunion amongst all who hold the Nicene faith," as though that sense of need "were universal in all thoughtful Christian hearts." That it ought to be, and in some future day may become so, can hardly be denied: unhappily the dawn is not yet visible of that day which shall see "reunion with all orthodox believers, whether within or without the recognized ecclesiastical organizations." Mr. Medd does what he may to hasten it; thus he mentions the Nicene Creed as that which may well be accounted the present test of orthodoxy, and the future keystone of that unity which prejudice and indifference and want of earnest charity now place out of reach.

Touching the religious services and the evange-

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listic work of the Wesleyans, Mr. Medd uses language which probably would be adopted by most Churchmen of this day:—

"Happily 'he that is not against us is on our part.' All good work done for Christ, however less in quantity and lower in quality, when done amid disunion and separation, is blessed by Him, as Wesley's work has been abundantly blessed, and redounds to the benefit of the whole Church" (p. 7).

Again: " . . . It is quite open to us without any sacrifice of principle to acknowledge to the full, and with thankfulness, the blessed works of grace which God may work by the hands of unordained evangelists preaching the truth in love. Neither need we, nor ought we, to doubt that He can and does give even a sacramental blessing to those who, brought up (by whose fault?) in total ignorance of true Church principles, and acting to the best of their knowledge, attend with pious hearts and right dispositions on Eucharistic services conducted by unordained persons" (p. 8, *note*).

Mr. Medd discusses Methodism in a kindly spirit —characterizing its origin as "essentially good and religious," and estimating its modern aspect by great practical results connected with missions, education, and general philanthropy.

Unquestionably the result of all these recent publications has been to reveal the real character and motives of Wesley much more clearly in the light of his own writings. Not many years have passed away since so well informed a writer as the

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late Mr. H. T. Buckle was found to describe Wesley as a "great schismatic," whose aim was to found a system which should "rival the Established Church."

More accurate views now prevail. Wesley is recognized as the founder of a new brotherhood, by the consistent and active piety of whose members his own Church might have been leavened and improved. Ardently attached to the English Church, he hoped to strengthen her position; and his design was not to establish any rival camp, but to render the old fortress impregnable by placing in its very midst an inner, and a carefully built, circle of defence.

In closing this branch of the inquiry, it may be noted that the early biographers exhibited a candour which must be admired. Dr. Whitehead showed no disposition to conceal or to obscure any part of his illustrious friend's character or work. Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore in the same spirit spoke of Wesley's "High Church principles" as well known —and this after the time when he had gathered together the Societies at the Foundry. They further described him in his old age as "peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England."[1]

Of late, again, Wesley's real character and position with regard to the English Church have been set forth very clearly. Probably the discussions of the

[1] Pages 192, 349. "Punctilious about forms, yet no formalist —thinking much about Lent, Ember Weeks, and Church-rites, yet not to the neglect of spiritual religion."—STOUGHTON'S *account of* GEO. HERBERT.

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last ten years have had a clarifying effect. Certain it is that Mr. Tyerman, at the close of his long and patient inquiry, sums up by describing the Methodistic founder as a hearty Churchman, though not always a consistent one.

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APPENDIX III.

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

MISS WEDGWOOD remarks in her Life of Wesley that on the return of the Wesleys from America they would naturally resort to these societies. Further, that many of the peculiarities of Methodism may be traced to that source. The Methodist Class-meeting was no more than the weekly meeting of young communicants—"to admonish and watch over each other." In its essentials the class-meeting had been described by Dr. Woodward before Wesley was born. Each little society had also its charitable fund, which was managed by an elected steward.

Robert Nelson, writing in 1703, also described the religious societies, of which there seem to have been about forty in London alone.

Samuel Wesley, the father of John and Charles, mentioned them in a letter written about the same time; and while defending them against the supposition of their "fomenting new schisms and divisions," he declared that they had brought many back to the Church who were divided from it. Dr. Coke

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and Mr. Moore state that "Many of these Societies remained in being in the year 1738, and received Wesley with open arms when he entered on his most extensive sphere of action."

The late Rev. F. C. Massingberd (Chancellor of Lincoln), who had described these societies in the *Christian Remembrancer* of June, 1851, reprinted his essay with notes and additions, and with some particulars of the early connection of the Wesley family with Epworth, in a small volume entitled "Sermons on Unity; with an Essay on Religious Societies, and a Lecture on the Life and Times of Wesley," London, 1868.

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APPENDIX IV.

THE EVENTS OF MAY, 1738.

THE biographers Coke and Moore give a clear account of the momentous consequences in the spiritual development of John Wesley, of his many conversations with Peter Bohler, quoting freely from his own Journals. After giving his own version of the unfavourable state in which he conceived himself to have remained for many years prior to the May of 1738, and of the events of the 24th day of that month, the biographers say :—

"His heart was now enlarged to declare, as he never had before, the loving-kindness of the Lord. . . . The word of God dwelt richly in him, and was in his mouth as a sharp two-edged sword to the wicked; but to those who felt the anguish of a wounded spirit, who had turned at God's reproof, he was an able minister of the New Testament."

Coke and Moore, however, state that many of the expressions used by Wesley at this time, in describing his own spiritual condition prior to 1738,

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were too strong. He was in the earlier period "in a state of salvation as a servant—having a measure of faith, but not the proper Christian faith."

In other words, when Wesley, under excited feelings, declared that he was "not a true Christian," he fell into an error which he afterwards acknowledged. And his brother Samuel, and the other friends who expressed their astonishment at the statement, better able to judge of his condition than he himself was, knew that he had been a true Christian for many years.

Whitehead, Coke and Moore, and Tyerman all agree in this, that Wesley at a later period regarded the events of 1738 in a different light. William Law had warned him that any set phrase of words might possibly lead astray; and the time came when Wesley himself acknowledged that "justification by faith" might be misunderstood, or might even be denied, by the best of men.[1]

An important passage occurs in a sermon of Wesley's entitled "The Lord our Righteousness." Mr. Hervey had said that he was "not solicitous as to any particular set of phrases;" all that was required for safety was deep, sorrowful humility, and an entire reliance on a personal Saviour. Wesley in his later years could appreciate and adopt this passage; and while quoting it he said that it deserved to be written in letters of gold.

That in all the later years Wesley regarded the events of May, 1738, as marking not the beginning,

[1] Journal, Dec. 1st, 1767.

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but the increase and deepening, of the spiritual life is evident from many passages in his writings.[1]

In 1778 Wesley thus replied to a correspondent who wrote "bitter things" against herself:—

"You are easily persuaded to believe him that tells you that you are void of every degree of saving faith. No. That is not the case. . . . You have received a degree of salvation: you are saved from many outward sins . . . you are saved in a degree from inward sins . . . you are saved from seeking happiness in the world. This is not a small thing. O praise God for all you have, and trust Him for all you want."

A thoughtful writer has thus described the events of May, 1738 (Life of Wesley, by Miss Wedgwood):—

"No candid person can read the account of Wesley's life before and after the change he so described and doubt that something did really happen then. . . . It is the most memorable of all events when any one wakes up to the conviction that besides all the men and women he sees round about him there is a Person Who is not seen, but Who is just as real as they, and an agent in a sense in which they are not; when he comes to feel that certain results are due to the will of God, not only in the sense in which any one must believe in it who believes in Him at all—that He is almighty,

[1] See the passages quoted by Southey, ii. 359.

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and could prevent it if He chose—but in that same direct, personal sense in which a man's lifting his hand is the result of his choosing to do so.

"It is literally and simply a new life.

"An element is come into the man's dealings with his fellow-men which alters everything, and which, in the words of one who will always be remembered among the best exponents of this change (St. Augustine), makes it delightful to escape from that which before it was unendurable to give up, and impossible to avoid that which it was before impossible to do. . . . The witness that the direct influence of God upon the spirit of man was not confined to a remote past, or a mysterious future, but was an actual fact in the lives of all who truly deserved the name of Christian, came home to Wesley, and to many others of that day, as the one force that was to bind a society together, and to give new life to the individual soul."

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APPENDIX V.

MR. INGHAM'S ADVICE.

THE following is an extract from Mr. Ingham's letter to John Wesley, dated from Osset, February 20th, 1740, referred to on page 54:—

"Justified persons are meek, simple, and child-like; they have doubts and fears; they are in a wilderness state; and, in this state, they are to be kept still and quiet, to search more deeply into their hearts, so that they may become more and more humble. They are likewise to depend wholly upon Christ; and to be kept from confusion; for if they come into confusion, they receive inconceivable damage.

"On the other hand, if they continue meek, gentle, still,—if they search into their hearts and depend on Christ, they will find their hearts to be sweetly drawn after Him; they will begin to loathe and abhor sin, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness; they will get strength daily; Christ will begin to manifest Himself by degrees; the darkness will vanish, and the day-star will arise in their

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hearts. Thus they will go on from strength to strength, till they become strong; and then they will begin to see things clearly; and so, by degrees, they will come to have the assurance of faith.

"You ask whether, in this intermediate state, they are 'children of wrath,' or 'heirs of the promises'?

"Without doubt, they are children of God, and in a state of salvation. A child may be heir to an estate, before it can speak, or know what an estate is; so we may be heirs of heaven before we know it, or are made sure of it. However, the assurance of faith is to be sought after. It may be attained; and it will be, by all who go forward."

[First printed in 1 Tyer. 306.]

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APPENDIX VI.

THE EUCHARISTICAL VOLUME.

THE full title of this book is as follows:—"Hymns on the Lord's Supper, by John Wesley, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and Charles Wesley, M.A., student of Christ-Ch., Oxford. With a preface concerning the *Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, extracted from Dr. Brevint. The seventh edition. '*This do in Remembrance of Me.*' 1 Cor. xi. 24. London, printed by R. Hawes, and sold at the Foundry in Moorfields, and at the Rev. John Wesley's Preaching Houses in Town and Country. 1776."

Daniel Brevint was born at Jersey in the year when Shakespere died, 1616. He studied logic and philosophy at Saumur, and in October, 1638, took his degree as Master of Arts at Oxford; afterwards he acted as French Protestant chaplain in the army of the Viscount de Turenne. At the restoration of Charles II. he came to England, and was appointed a Prebendary of Durham, and in 1681 Dean of Lincoln. He died May 5, 1695. Besides writing a

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work on the Roman Mass, and on "Saul and Samuel at Endor," and translating English books into French, he wrote that Treatise on the Eucharist which the Wesleys adopted, and made a household book in their time and amongst their followers.

"Its language," said the late Rev. W. Gresley, "will be found to concur remarkably with that of the best divines of the English Church." It is so little known in these days, that it is important to ascertain what were the doctrines of the early Methodists, by examining this remarkable treatise. It has been stated in the text that many hymns by Charles Wesley, directly bearing on the sections of the treatise, and sometimes rather closely paraphrasing them, were added to the numerous editions of the little volume.

The treatise of Brevint, as edited by the Wesleys, is divided into eight sections, as follows:—*Section* 1. The importance of well understanding the nature of this Sacrament. *Section* 2. Concerning the Sacrament, as it is a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ. *Section* 3. The Sacrament, as it is a sign of present graces. *Section* 4. The Sacrament, as it is a means of grace. *Section* 5. The Sacrament, as it is a pledge of future glory. *Section* 6. The Sacrament, as it is a sacrifice, and first of the commemorative sacrifice. *Section* 7. Concerning the sacrifice of ourselves. *Section* 8. Concerning the sacrifice of our goods.

The following is from section 3:—

"This Sacrament represents the blessings which

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we received by His Passion. Now as without bread and wine, or something answerable to it, the strongest bodies soon decay; so, without the virtue of the body and blood of Christ, the holiest souls must soon perish. And as bread and wine keep up our *natural life*, so doth our Lord Jesus, by a continual supply of strength and grace, represented by bread and wine, sustain that *spiritual life* which He hath procured us by His cross.

"The first breath of spiritual life in our nostrils is the first purchase of Christ's blood. But, alas! how soon would this first life vanish away, were it not followed and supported by a second? Therefore the sacrifice of Christ procures also grace to renew and preserve the life He hath given. As the blood which He shed satisfied the Divine justice, and removed our punishment, so the water washes and cleanses the pardoned soul; and both these blessings are inseparable, even as the blood and water were which flowed together out of His side.

"There remains yet another life, which is an absolute redemption from death and our miseries. This, as to the right of it, is, together with the other, purchased by the same sacrifice; but as to the possession, it is reserved for us in heaven, till Christ become our full and final redemption. Now the giver of these lives is the preserver of them too; and to this end He sets up a table by His altar, where He engages to feed our souls with the constant supply of His mercies, as really as He feeds our bodies with this bread and wine. In the de-

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liverance from Egypt, here is a people saved by the sacrifice of the Passover; and lest they should die in the wilderness, there you see an angel leading them with His light, keeping them cool under the shadow of His cloud, and feeding them with manna. Jesus is the truth foreshowed by these figures. He was the true Passover when He died upon the cross; and He feeds from heaven by continual pouring out His blessings on the souls He redeemed by pouring out His blood.

"Thus this sacrament alone represents at once both what our Lord suffered and what He still doth for us. What we take and eat is made of a substance, cut, bruised, and put to the fire—that shows my Saviour's Passion; and it was used thus, that it might afford me food—that shows the benefit I received by His Passion.

"In the Sacrament are represented both life and death; the life is mine, the death is my Saviour's. O blessed Jesus, my life comes out of Thy death; and the salvation I hope for is purchased with all the pains and agonies which Thou didst suffer!"

Of section 4 it will be necessary to present a longer specimen. It commences thus:—

"Hitherto we have considered this holy Sacrament both as a memorial of the death of Christ and a sign of those graces wherewith He sustains and nourishes believing souls. But this is not all, for both the end of the Holy Communion, the wants and desires of those who receive it, and the strength of other places of Scripture, require that much more

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be contained therein than a bare memorial or representation. (1.) The end of the Holy Communion, which is to make us partakers of Christ in another manner than when we only hear His word; (2.) The wants and desires of those who receive it, who seek not a bare representation or remembrance. I want and seek my Saviour Himself, and I haste to this Sacrament for the same purpose that S. Peter and S. John hasted to His sepulchre; because I hope to find Him there. (3.) The strength of other places of Scripture which allow it a far greater virtue than that of representing only, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?' A means of communicating the blood there represented and remembered to every believing soul.

"And that it doth convey grace and blessing to the true believer, is evident from its conveying a curse to the profane. 'Whosoever eateth unworthily,' saith S. Paul, 'eateth damnation to himself.' And how can we think that it is thus really hurtful when abused, but not really blissful in its right use? Or that this bread should be effectual to procure death, but not effectual to procure salvation? God forbid that the body of Christ, who came to save, not to destroy, should not shed as much of its *savour of life* to the devout soul as it doth of its *savour of death* to the wicked and impenitent.

"I come then to God's altar, with a full persuasion that these words, 'This is my body,' promise me

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more than a figure; that this holy banquet is not a bare memorial only, but may actually convey as many blessings to me as it brings curses on a profane receiver. Indeed in what manner this is done I know not; it is enough for me to admire. 'One thing I know' (as said the blind man of our Lord), 'he laid clay upon my eyes, and behold I see.' He hath blessed and given me this bread, and my soul received comfort. I know that clay hath nothing in itself which can impart grace, holiness, and salvation. But I know also, that it is the ordinary way of God to produce His greatest works at the presence (though not by the power) of the most useless instruments. At the very stroke of a rod he divided the sea. At the blowing some trumpets he threw down walls. At the washing in Jordan, he cured Naaman of a plague that was naturally incurable. And when but a shadow went by, or some oil was dropped, or clothes were touched by those that were sick, presently virtue went out, not of rods, or trumpets, or shadows, or clothes, but of Himself.

"It was the right hand of the Lord which of old time brought these mighty things to pass, either when the Red Sea opened a way for Israel to march, or when the rock poured out rivers to refresh them. And so now it is Christ Himself, with His body and blood once offered to God upon the cross, and ever since standing before Him as slain, who fills His Church with the perfumes of His sacrifice, whence faithful communicants return home with the first-

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fruits of salvation. Bread and wine can contribute no more to it than the rod of Moses, or the oil of the Apostles. But yet since it pleaseth Christ to work thereby, O my God, whensoever Thou shalt bid me 'go, and wash in Jordan,' I will go, and will no more doubt being made free from my sins than if I had bathed in Thy blood. And when Thou sayest 'Go take and eat this bread' which I have blessed, I will doubt no more of being fed with the bread of life, than if I were eating Thy very flesh.

"This Victim having been offered up in the fulness of time, and in the midst of the world, which is Christ's great temple, and having been thence carried up to heaven, which is His sanctuary, from thence spreads salvation all around, as the burnt-offering did its smoke. And thus His body and blood have everywhere, but especially at this Sacrament, a true and real presence. When He offered Himself upon earth, the vapour of His atonement went up and darkened the very sun: and by rending the great veil, it clearly showed He had made a way into heaven. And since He is gone up, He sends down to earth the graces that spring continually both from His everlasting sacrifice and from the continual intercession that attends it. So that we need not say, 'Who will go up into heaven?' since without either ascending or descending this sacred body of Jesus fills with atonement and blessing the remotest parts of the temple."

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The last passage was thus vigorously paraphrased in one of the hymns:—

"Victim Divine, Thy grace we claim,
While thus Thy precious death we show;
Once offer'd up a spotless Lamb,
In Thy great temple here below,
Thou didst for all mankind atone,
And standest now before the throne.

Thou standest in the holiest place,
As now for guilty sinners slain;
The blood of sprinkling speaks, and prays
All-prevalent for helpless man;
Thy blood is still our ransom found,
And speaks salvation all around.

The smoke of Thy atonement here
Darken'd the sun, and rent the veil,
Made the new way to heaven appear,
And show'd the great Invisible;
Well pleased in Thee, our God look'd down,
And call'd His rebels to a crown.

He still respects Thy sacrifice,
Its savour sweet doth always please;
The offering smokes through earth and skies,
Diffusing life, and joy, and peace:
To these Thy lower courts it comes,
And fills them with divine perfumes.

We need not now go up to heaven,
To bring the long-sought Saviour down;
Thou art to all already given,
Thou dost even now Thy banquet crown:
To every faithful soul appear,
And show Thy Real Presence here."

[1] *cf.* "Olney Hymns," book ii., no. 58.
"Jesus, the bread of life, is given
To be our daily food," etc., etc.

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The following is from section 6:—

The Holy Communion alone brings together these two great ends, atonement of sins, and acceptable duty to God, of which all the sacrifices of old were no more than weak shadows.

"As for the atonement of sin, it is sure the sacrifice of Christ alone was sufficient for it: and that this great sacrifice, being both of an infinite value to satisfy the most severe justice, and of an infinite virtue to produce all its effects at once, need never more be repeated. This perhaps was the want of faith in Moses (Numb. xx. 12): to strike a second time, and without order, that mysterious rock, which to strike once had been enough. For this second blow could only proceed from a faithless mistrust, as if the first, which alone was enjoined, could not suffice. But it were much greater offence against the blood of Christ, to question its infinite worth. The offering of it therefore must needs be once only, and the repeating thereof utterly superfluous.

"Nevertheless, this sacrifice, which by a real oblation was not to be offered more than once, is by a devout and thankful commemoration to be offered up every day.

"This is what the Apostle calls 'to set forth the death of the Lord:' to set it forth as well before the eyes of God the Father as before the eyes of men; and what S. Austin explained, when he said, The holy flesh of Jesus was offered in three manners: by prefiguring sacrifices under the law before His

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coming into the world, in real deed upon His cross, and by a commemorative sacrament after He ascended into heaven.

"All this comes to, 1. That the sacrifice in itself can never be repeated; 2. That nevertheless, this Sacrament, by our remembrance, becomes a kind of sacrifice, whereby we present before God the Father that precious oblation of His Son once offered. And thus do we every day offer unto God the meritorious sufferings of His Son our Lord, as the only sure ground whereon God may give, and we obtain, the blessings we pray for. Now, there is no ordinance or mystery that is so blessed an instrument to reach this everlasting sacrifice, and to set it solemnly forth before the eyes of God, as the Holy Communion is.

"To men it is a sacred table, where God's minister is ordered to represent from God his master, the Passion of His dear Son, as still flesh, and still powerful for their eternal salvation. And to God it is an altar, whereon men mystically present to Him the same sacrifice, as still bleeding and suing for mercy. And because it is the High Priest Himself, the true anointed of the Lord, who hath set up both this table and the altar for the communication of His body and blood to men, and for the representation of both to God: it cannot be doubted but that the one is most profitable to the penitent sinner, and the other most acceptable to His gracious Father.

"The people of Israel, in worshipping, ever turned

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their eyes and their hearts towards that sacrifice, the blood whereof the high priest was to carry into the sanctuary.

"So let us ever turn our eyes and hearts towards Jesus our eternal High Priest, who is gone up into the true sanctuary, and doth there continually present both His own body and blood before God, and (as Aaron did) all the true Israel of God in a memorial. In the meantime we, beneath in the Church, present to God His body and blood in a memorial, that under this shadow of His Cross, and figure of His Sacrifice, we may present ourselves in very deed before Him."

The Eucharistical hymn, freely paraphrasing this section, is as follows :—

"All hail, Redeemer of mankind!
Thy life on Calvary resign'd
Did fully once for all atone,
Thy blood hath paid our utmost price,
Thine all-sufficient Sacrifice
Remains eternally alone:

Angels and men might strive in vain,
They could not add the smallest grain
To augment Thy death's atoning power.
Thy sacrifice is all complete,
The death Thou never canst repeat,
Once offer'd up to die no more.

Yet may we celebrate below,
And daily thus Thy offering show
Exposed before Thy Father's eyes!
In this tremendous mystery
Present Thee bleeding on the tree
Our everlasting sacrifice;

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Father, behold Thy dying Son;
Ev'n now He lays our ransom down,
Ev'n now declares our sins forgiven;
His flesh is rent, the living way
Is open'd to eternal day,
And lo, through Him we pass to heaven!"

Of the 7th section the following is an example:—

"Now though we are called at all times to this conformity and communion in the sufferings of Christ, yet more especially when we approach this dreadful mystery, let us take a peculiar care that as both the principal and additional sacrifices went up toward heaven in the same flame, so Jesus Christ and all His members may jointly appear before God, that we may offer up our souls and bodies, at the same time, in the same place, and in the same oblation.

"Let us take care to attend on this sacrifice in such a manner,—first, as may become faithful disciples who are resolved to die for and with their Master; (2.) as true members that cannot outlive their Head; and (3.) as penitent sinners, who cannot look for any share in the glory of their Saviour, unless they really enter into the communion of that sacrifice and those sufferings which their Master, their Head, and their Saviour has passed through, and which they are engaged to, by this very Sacrament.

"To this effect the faithful worshipper, presenting that soul and body which God hath given him at the altar, may say, Lo I come, if this soul and body may be useful to anything, to do Thy will, O God.

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And if it please Thee to use the power Thou hast over dust and ashes, over weak flesh and blood, over a brittle vessel of clay, over the work of Thine hands, lo, here they are, to suffer also Thy good pleasure.

"If Thou please to visit me either with pain or dishonour, I will humble myself under it, and, through Thy grace, be obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross."

The treatise concludes thus:—

"Now though our Lord, by that everlasting sacrifice of Himself, offers Himself at all times and in all places, as we likewise offer ourselves and all that is ours, to be a continual sacrifice; yet because Christ offers Himself for us at the Holy Communion, in a peculiar manner, we also should then, in a more especial manner, renew all our sacrifices. Then and there, at the altar of God, it is right both to repeat all the vows and promises, which, for some hindrance or other, we had not the convenience to fulfil; and to renew all those other performances, which can never be fulfilled but with the end of our days.

"But at the same time that the Christian believer does any good work, let him draw out of the good treasure of his heart fire and frankincense, that is, such zeal and love as may raise good, moral works into religious sacrifices. Whenever he helps his neighbour, let him so reverently and fervently lift up his heart to God as may become both that Majesty he adores, and the pious act which he

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intends. And then whenever he do it, at his door, or in the way, or in the temple, it matters not; for the hour is long since come, that acts of religion are not confined either to Jerusalem or to this mountain.

"Wheresoever thou hast the occasion of doing a holy work, there God makes holy ground for thee; only in order to become a spiritual worshipper, the work must be done in spirit and in truth: with such a mind and thought, with such faith and love, as though thou wert laying thy oblation upon the altar, where thou knowest that Christ will both effectually find and graciously accept it."

Wesley's sermon on the duty of constant communion (revised by himself in 1788) contains the following passages. The ancient canon quoted is one of those Apostolical canons which he had so often studied in early life, and had never forgotten:—

"Let every one, then, who has any desire to please God, or any love for his own soul, obey God, and consult the good of his own soul by communicating every time he can: like the first Christians, with whom the Christian Sacrifice was a constant part of the Lord's-day service. And for several centuries they received it almost every day, four days a week always, and every Saint's-day besides. Accordingly, those who joined in the prayers of the faithful never failed to partake of the blessed Sacrament. What opinion they had of any who

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turned his back upon it, we learn from that ancient canon, 'If any believer join in the prayers of the faithful, and go away without receiving the Lord's Supper, let him be excommunicated, as bringing confusion into the Church of God."

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APPENDIX VII.

HOLY BAPTISM.

If but a few of Wesley's Sermons set forth the doctrine of Christian Baptism, those in which it is set forth are extremely clear and pointed. The original Wesleyan doctrine will be found at length in one treatise or tract (referred to on page 61), and more briefly in at least three of Wesley's printed Sermons.

His treatise on Baptism, dated November 11, 1756, is reprinted in Vol. X. of the Works (standard edition). In it Baptism is defined as the initiatory sacrament, which enters us into covenant with God. It was instituted by Christ, who alone has power to institute a proper sacrament, a sign, seal, pledge, and means of grace, perpetually obligatory on all Christians. We know not, indeed, the exact time of its institution; but we know it was long before our Lord's ascension. And it was instituted in the room of circumcision. For as that was a sign and seal of God's covenant, so is this.

Then follows a demonstration that sprinkling is

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equal to immersion (showing that in the course of some years Wesley had modified his opinion on this point. See page 66 of the text).

The second section considers the benefits received in Baptism:—The first of these is the washing away the guilt of original sin. 2nd, We enter into covenant with God. 3rd, We are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ, its Head (1 Cor. ii. 13; Eph. iv. 12). From which spiritual vital union with Him proceeds the influence of His grace on those that are baptized. 4th, By baptism "we who were by nature the children of wrath are made the children of God, and this generation which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism, is more than being barely admitted into the Church, being grafted into the body of Christ's Church. *We are made the children of God.* This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord (John iii. 5). By water, then, as a means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again. Our Church, therefore, ascribes no greater virtue to baptism than Christ Himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing only, but to the inward grace, which, added thereto, makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit by long-continued wickedness." 5th, In consequence of our being made children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. "If children," as the Apostle observes, "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs

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with Christ." Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, "a kingdom which cannot be moved." Baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the Gospel: supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.

The third section shows that this was designed to remain always in the Church; and that infants are equally with adults proper subjects of baptism. The argument for this is summarized thus:—If outward baptism be generally, in an ordinary way, necessary to salvation, and infants may be saved as well as adults, nor ought we to neglect any means of saving them; if our Lord commands such to come, to be brought unto Him, and declares, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" if infants are capable of making a covenant, or having a covenant made for them by others, being included in Abraham's covenant (which was a covenant of faith, an evangelical covenant), and never excluded by Christ; if they have a right to be members of the Church, and were accordingly members of the Jewish; if, suppose our Lord had designed to exclude them from baptism, He must have expressly forbidden His Apostles to baptize them (which none dares to affirm He did), since otherwise they would do it of course, according to universal practice of their nation; if it is highly probable they did so, even from the letter of Scripture, because they frequently baptized whole households; if the whole Church of Christ, for seventeen hundred years

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together, baptized infants, and were never opposed till the last century but one, by some not very holy men in Germany; lastly, if there are such inestimable benefits conferred in baptism, the washing away the guilt of original sin, the engrafting us into Christ, by making us members of His Church, and thereby giving us a right to all the blessings of the Gospel; it follows that infants ought to be baptized, and that none ought to hinder them.

Wesley's sermon "of the Church" speaks thus of Holy Baptism—the text being from Eph. iv. 1–6:—

"'There is one baptism;' which is the outward sign our one Lord has been pleased to appoint, of all that inward and spiritual grace which He is continually bestowing upon His Church. It is likewise a precious means, whereby this faith and hope are given to those that diligently seek Him. Some, indeed, have been inclined to interpret this in a figurative sense; as if it referred to that baptism of the Holy Ghost which the Apostles received at the day of Pentecost, and which, in a lower degree, is given to all believers: but it is a stated rule in interpreting Scripture, never to depart from the plain, literal sense, unless it implies an absurdity."

Wesley's Sermon on "the New Birth" contains the following passage:—

"A man may possibly be born of water, and yet not be born of the Spirit. There may sometimes be

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the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. *I do not now speak with regard to infants;* it is certain, our Church supposes, that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again. And it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. . . ."

Wesley's Sermon on "the Marks of the New Birth" contains the same doctrine in other words:—

"The question is not what you were made in baptism (do not evade), but what are you now? . . . . Who denies that you were then made 'children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven?' But, notwithstanding this, ye are now children of the devil. Therefore ye must be born again. . . . . If ye have been baptized, your only hope is this—that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now the children of the devil, may yet again receive power to become the sons of God, that they may receive again what they have lost."

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APPENDIX VIII.

KING ON THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

PETER KING, who was born of a dissenting family in the West of England in 1669, went to the Calvinistic University of Leyden, where he appears to have diligently studied the writings of many of the early fathers. It seems to have been in 1690 that he published an ingenious little book, entitled "An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church—by an impartial hand." Certainly the inquiry is very fairly and temperately conducted, which is the more remarkable as its author had been biassed by education, and even then was but twenty-one years of age.

The copy before me was printed in the year 1712, and is in two parts, with separate title pages, and containing respectively 181 and 176 pp. small 8vo. From the internal evidence afforded by this interesting little work (which well deserves to be reprinted, with a few notes and corrections) I conclude that the inquiry into the Primitive Church,

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instead of confirming its author in the opinions in which he had been reared, led him (though, perhaps, not at once) to join the English Church. The whole tenor of his essay is strongly against dissent, and in favour of the claims of one Catholic and Apostolic Church, under chief pastors, deriving their authority mediately from the Apostles. Mr. Hockin, in his recent essay, states that King, being vigorously answered by Sclater, a non-juring divine, was afterwards convinced that he had fallen into error as to the nature of the episcopal office.

Although Wesley did not hold to some of the opinions expressed in Peter King's essay, it seems that he retained in memory several portions of it. His own sermons "on the Church" and on "Schism" certainly contain expressions which appear to have been taken from this source.

King's opening chapter deals with the various significations of the word "church"; and taking that word to signify one district or parish under the care of one, and only one, chief pastor or bishop, he closes the chapter with extracts from Tertullian, proving that the orthodox were in those days wont to maintain their own position, and to impeach that of the heretics, by reference to the well-known fact of the succession in office of their bishops from the Apostles. The catalogue or pedigree of the bishops was even then made out and pointed at as a title-deed of the Church to apostolic authority.

The object of Chapter II. is to show that during the first three centuries the parishes, or (as we

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should call them) dioceses, were small, and were so arranged as that the faithful could all meet on the Sunday in one place. "The bishop had but one altar or communion table in his whole diocese, at which his whole flock received the Sacrament." It was an act of schism to set up a rival altar; and the well-known quotations on this point are given from St. Ignatius and St. Cyprian. King's argument is very weak when he endeavours to show that there was but one church, with one altar throughout the vast city of Rome. He admits that in Alexandria there were several distinct congregations, all under one bishop; but he does not seem to see that this instance of Alexandria cuts the ground from under his feet.

Chapter III. states very fairly that a bishop when nominated by the faithful of the diocese, had to be approved of, and installed, by several other bishops; and three is arrived at as the necessary number of consecrating or "installing" bishops.

Chapter IV. endeavours to prove that the presbyters were in the primitive centuries simply the helpers, or curates, of a bishop—inferior only in rank. Yet they were unable to perform any functions without the permission of the bishop of the place or parish. King states that for any presbyter to officiate without the bishop's consent was "unaccountable impudence and a most detestable act of schism." In the bishop's absence, his presbyters "performed," as King thought, "all those ecclesiastical offices which were incumbent on him." He

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thought that they were empowered to confirm and ordain, as well as to administer the Sacraments; and he made ready use of the well-known passage of St. Clement, which describes the regular succession from the Apostles of only "Bishops and Deacons." The chief pastor, or *summus sacerdos*, was he who sat on an elevated seat in the chancel, at the head of the semicircle, different in degree and authority from the rest, not in Order.

Chapter V. describes fairly the inferior order of the deacons.

Chapter VI. treats of the powers of the laity.

Chapter VII. describes the strict discipline of the early church. Chapter VIII. treats of the relation of one church to another; and the whole tendency is utterly against any theory of independency. Chapter IX. gives a definition of "schism," which was probably rather too strong for Wesley, inasmuch as unity is very strongly insisted on. "Schism" is described as involved in the act of separation from the pastor or bishop—unless for very grave and obvious reasons, such as heresy or public scandal. Strong passages from St. Cyprian are quoted, according to which to erect a new altar is impious and sacrilegious. With such extracts the first section of the work comes to a close.

Part II. of King's essay is, on the whole, well designed and well executed, though, on some points, open to objection. It describes the public worship of the primitive Church—the lessons, the psalms, the sermon. The congregation after the sermon all

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turned towards the east, and joined in the Lord's Prayer—the only "fixed public form of prayer." The next chapters treat of the administration of the two Sacraments in the early Church; and there is an elaborate vindication of the baptism of infants. The origin of the Apostles' Creed is then inquired into; and the author surmises that various passages were inserted from time to time to meet certain heresies as they arose; *e.g.* "the *Holy Catholic Church*, to exclude thereby all heretics and schismatics from being within the pale thereof." Following on the description of Holy Baptism, is that of Signation, or the sign of the Cross. Confirmation is then dealt with—this, as King supposed, being a function of the priesthood. The celebration of Holy Communion on the Lord's day is treated of at length; after which the fixed and the occasional Fasts are described. It is stated that as to the observance of Fasts and Festivals there was little uniformity in ancient days.

The author closes with some remarks on the desirability of union amongst Christians. Existing differences were, he thankfully states, not about faith or morals, or the essentials of religion, but on lesser matters; and he expresses a hope that, by the advancement to the head of affairs of men of prudence and moderation, the nation may become united. His reference to the hierarchy is so respectfully worded as to justify the belief that, even in the student days when he wrote that essay which contains errors and imperfections of an obvious

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kind, he had strong leanings towards the English Church. King became Lord Chancellor in 1725, and died in 1733. He was "not of the highest genius, but of most respectable talents." (Campbell's "Chancellors," iv. 567.)

King's essay was written probably while he was a student at Leyden, and certainly when he had hardly yet attained to man's estate. It is not a little singular that the "Irenicon," which Wesley also sometimes cited in support of his peculiar views of the episcopal office, was written when Stillingfleet was but twenty-four. If Wesley could have foreseen the use which was to be made of his somewhat incautious quotations on matters of Church government, he would doubtless have taken pains to secure his own position otherwise than by the aid of two writers who had hardly attained to "years of discretion."

Further, it is interesting to note that Wesley entirely differed from Peter King as to the coming together of all the Christians of the same city to one altar and in one congregation. His sermon "Of the Church" contains the following passage, which is in direct opposition to King's description of the primitive Church in Rome:—

"Those whom God called out of the world (so the original word properly signifies), uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger church; as 'the church at Jerusalem;' that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called. But considering how swiftly these were multiplied after the day of Pente-

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cost, it cannot be supposed that they could continue to assemble in one place; especially as they had not then any large place, neither would they have been permitted to build one. In consequence, they must have divided themselves, even at Jerusalem, into several distinct congregations. In like manner, when St. Paul, several years after, wrote to the *church in Rome* (directing his letter, 'To all that are in Rome, called to be saints') it cannot be supposed that they had any one building capable of containing them all; but they were divided into several congregations, *assembling in several parts of the city.*"

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APPENDIX IX.

WESLEY ON SCHISM.

One of Wesley's peculiar views was that concerning Schism; and it is curious to observe that in his interpretation of this word he by no means followed the oft-quoted essay by Peter King on the Primitive Church. In that ingenious essay schism is described as separation from the lawfully appointed bishop, and the erection of another or a rival altar, without regard to the claims of that chief pastor who held his office by succession from the apostles.

Wesley, as we know, upheld throughout his long career the value and excellence of his own Church of England. Out of many passages in his journal and writings which might be quoted, it is sufficient to give that from a letter which he wrote late in life to Sir Henry Trelawney, with whom he had some correspondence on the Calvinistic controversy. In it he expressed satisfaction at the removal of "prejudices against the Church;" and he further says, "Having had an opportunity of seeing several of the Churches abroad, and having deeply con-

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sidered the several sorts of dissenters at home, I am fully convinced that our own Church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the Scriptural plan than any other in Europe." (Whitehead, ii. 373.)

It will be at once observed that Wesley here relies on the intrinsic superiority, and the truly Scriptural character, of the English Church, and not on her high prerogative, or her exclusive claims on the allegiance of Christians in England.

Separation from the Church, however objectionable on other grounds to his mind, he did not regard as coming within the exact definition of "schism," which he described, not as the departure from a church, but as the stirring up of strifes within her pale and by her own adherents. This was a view peculiar, or nearly so, to himself; and it naturally led to a very cautious and very unfrequent use on his part of the word "schism."

But, while Wesley declined to place on the word "schism" the interpretation which is usually placed on it, he warned his people against "separation." His sermon "on Schism" (from the text 1 Cor. xii. 25) explains at length his peculiar interpretation of that word. Reviewing the several passages in which the word occurs, he arrives at the conclusion that in the New Testament schism always means party spirit, with resulting anger and contention, *within* a church.

This sermon then proceeds to ask—"'Is there no sin resembling what so many learned and pious writers have termed schism, and against which

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all the members of religious communities have need to be carefully guarded?' I do not doubt but there is; and I cannot tell, whether this, too, may not, in a remote sense, be called schism: I mean, 'a causeless separation from a body of living Christians.' There is no absurdity in taking the word in this sense, though it be not strictly scriptural. And it is certain all the members of Christian communities should be carefully guarded against it. For how little a thing soever it may seem, and how innocent soever it may be accounted, schism, even in this sense, is both evil in itself, and productive of evil consequences.

"It is evil in itself. To separate ourselves from a body of living Christians, with whom we were before united, is a grievous breach of the law of love. It is the nature of love to unite us together; and the greater the love, the stricter the union. And while this continues in its strength, nothing can divide those whom love has united. It is only when our love grows cold, that we can think of separating from our brethren. And this is certainly the case with any who willingly separate from their Christian brethren. The pretences for separation may be innumerable, but want of love is always the real cause: otherwise they would still hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is therefore contrary to all those commands of God, wherein brotherly love is enjoined: to that of St. Paul, 'Let brotherly love continue;'—that of St. John, 'My beloved children, love one another;'

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and especially to that of our blessed Master, 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Yea, 'By this,' saith He, 'shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'"

Wesley then describes the mischievous consequences arising from that which he called separation, and which others call schism; and he continues thus:—

"These consequences are not imaginary, are not built on mere conjectures, but on plain matter of fact. This has been the case again and again within these last thirty or forty years: these have been the fruits which we have seen, over and over, to be consequent on such a separation.

"And what a grievous stumblingblock must these things be to those who are without, to those who are strangers to religion, who have neither the form nor the power of godliness! How will they triumph over these once eminent Christians! How boldly ask, 'What are they better than us?' How will they harden their hearts more and more against the truth, and bless themselves in their wickedness! from which, possibly, the example of the Christians might have reclaimed them, had they continued unblamable in their behaviour."

Coming then to a practical question, which would arise in the minds of his hearers, he admitted that if it were not possible to remain in the Church of England without doing what the law of God forbade, or omitting what it enjoined, then separation

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from the Church might be justifiable. But such (he declared) was not the case, either with his hearers or himself: This he was anxious to point out, because many who were really religious people had no clear conception of the sin of separation; and it was necessary to point out to them that they were chargeable with an action in itself evil, and with all the serious consequences to follow from it. Finally, he entreated his hearers to pause before rashly tearing asunder sacred ties, and rending the body of Christ.

This sermon, therefore, while it tends to discourage the use (in its ordinary acceptation) of the word "schism," ranges John Wesley on the side of those who look upon "separation" from a long planted and an orthodox Church like that in England as a very serious evil, involving a most grave responsibility.

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APPENDIX X.

THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

ABOUT the year 1756, a Mr. Norton wrote a letter to John Wesley, finding fault with his very strict exercise of discipline over his preachers. Much stress was laid on the fact that the preachers were in many things not allowed the liberty of acting "according to their own consciences." With regard to this particular accusation, Wesley replied thus:—

"I again allow the fact, but deny the consequence. I mean, I allow the fact thus far: some of our preachers, who are *not ordained*, think it quite right to administer the Lord's Supper, and believe it would do much good. I think it quite wrong, and believe it would do much hurt. Hereupon I say I have no right over your conscience nor you over mine: therefore both you and I must follow our own conscience. You believe it is a duty to administer: do so; and herein follow your own conscience. I verily believe it is a sin; which, consequently, I dare not *tolerate*, and herein I follow mine. Yet this is no *persecution* were I to separate from our society those who practise what

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I believe is contrary to the word and destructive of the work of God."

In December Mr. Wesley wrote to a friend as follows:—

"I do not see that Diocesan Episcopacy is necessary, but I do that it is highly expedient. But whether it were or no, the spirit shown in those verses[1] is wrong from end to end. Neither J. E. nor any other separatist can ever be expected to own prejudice, pride, or interest to be his motive. Nevertheless I do and must blame every one of them, for the act of separating. Afterwards I leave them to God.

"The Apostles had not the Lordships or the revenues, but they had the *office* of Diocesan Bishops. But let that point sleep; we have things to think of which are *magis ad nos*. Keep from proselytizing others; and keep your opinion till dooms-day; stupid, self-inconsistent, unprimitive, and unscriptural as it is.

"I have spoken my judgment concerning lay-administering at large, both to C. P.[1] and N. Norton. I went as far as I could with a safe conscience. I must follow my conscience, and they their own. They who dissuade people from attending the Church and Sacrament, do certainly 'draw them from the Church.'"

Such were Wesley's opinions in middle age; and it is desirable to recall the passages, that we may see whether he really varied from this position

[1] Reference to rhymes against the Church, by Perronet, jun. See p. 122, *ante*.

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when he became old. On many occasions, but most clearly and minutely in the Sermon on the Ministerial Office, he explained to his preachers the limits of their commission.

This celebrated discourse, which was first printed in the *Arminian Magazine*, was written by Wesley, while at Cork, in 1789. He seems to have preached it not only before his Conference in Ireland, but also before that in England; for it is most distinctly stated by Dr. Whitehead that it was more than once preached before the "assembled preachers."

The text was Heb. v. 4—"No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."

This sermon described the priestly office, as it existed under the Mosaic Law, and as it was continued under the new dispensation; and it defined the inferior rank in the ministry of those who did not belong to the priesthood, but who were only called to teach and to expound. It pointed out that under the old dispensation there had been prophets and teachers who were not qualified to serve at the altar; and that in the Christian Church there originally had been, and still were found in many countries, those who, under various designations, occupied a place important, but still subordinate.[1]

[1] More than a century and a half earlier the learned Hooker (Eccl. Polity, Book V.) had described prophets as having "a special gift of expounding scriptures," but as "not therefore to be reckoned with the clergy."

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The preacher then described the revival of religion in the earlier part of the century—the sowing of the good seed by a few earnest members of the Church of England, and the formation of the Methodist Society. Thomas Maxfield and others had offered to serve as sons in the Gospel, and the preacher called attention to the terms of their commission in these terms:—

"We received them as prophets, not as priests,—wholly and solely to preach, *not to administer sacraments*. And those who imagine these offices to be inseparably joined are totally ignorant of the constitution of the whole Jewish as well as Christian Church. Neither the Romish, nor the English, nor the Presbyterian Churches ever accounted them so. Otherwise we should never have accepted the service either of Mr. Maxfield, Richards, or Westell.

"*In* 1774, *all the Methodist Preachers had their first conference. But none of them dreamed that the being called to preach gave them any right to administer sacraments.* And when that question was proposed, 'In what light are we to consider ourselves?' it was answered, 'As *extraordinary messengers*, raised up to provoke the *ordinary* ones to jealousy.' In order hereto, one of our first rules was, given to each Preacher, 'You are to do *that part* of the work which we appoint.' But *what work* was this? Did we ever appoint you to administer sacraments; to exercise the priestly office? Such a design never entered into our mind; it was the farthest from our thoughts: and if any Preacher

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had taken such a step, we should have looked upon it as a palpable breach of this rule, and consequently as a recantation of our Connexion.

"For, supposing (what I utterly deny) that the receiving you as a Preacher, at the same time gave an authority to administer the sacraments; yet it gave you no other authority than to do it, or anything else, *where I appoint.* But where did I appoint you to do this? Nowhere at all. Therefore, by this very rule, you are excluded from doing it. *And in doing it, you renounce the first principle of Methodism, which was wholly and solely to preach the gospel.*

"It was several years after our society was formed before any attempt of this kind was made. The first was, I apprehend, at Norwich. One of our Preachers there yielded to the importunity of a few of the people, and baptized their children. But as soon as it was known, he was informed it must not be, unless he designed to leave our Connexion. He promised to do it no more; and I suppose he kept his promise.

"Now, as long as the Methodists keep to this plan, they cannot separate from the Church. And this is our peculiar glory. It is new upon the earth. Revolve all the histories of the Church, from the earliest ages, and you will find, whenever there was a great work of God in any particular city or nation, the subjects of that work soon said to their neighbours, 'Stand by yourselves, for we are holier than you!' As soon as ever they separated themselves, either

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they retired into deserts, or they built religious houses; or at least formed parties, into which none was admitted but such as subscribed both to their judgment and practice. But with the Methodists it is quite otherwise: they are not a sect or party: they do not separate from the religious community to which they at first belonged; *they are still members of the Church—such they desire to live and die. And I believe, one reason why God is pleased to continue my life so long is, to confirm them in their present purpose, not to separate from the Church.*

"But, notwithstanding this, many warm men say, 'Nay, but you *do* separate from the Church.' Others are equally warm, because they say *I do not.* I will nakedly declare the thing as it is.

"I hold all the doctrines of the Church of England. I love her liturgy. I approve her plan of discipline, and only wish it could be put in execution. I do not knowingly vary from any rule of the Church, unless in those few instances, where I judge, and as far as I judge, there is an absolute necessity.

"For instance, (1.) As few Clergymen open their churches to me, I am under the necessity of *preaching abroad.*

"(2.) As I know no forms that will suit all occasions, I am often under a necessity of *praying extempore.*

"(3.) In order to build up the flock of Christ in faith and love, I am under a necessity of uniting them together, and of dividing them into little

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companies, that they may provoke one another to love and good works.

"(4.) That my fellow-labourers and I may more effectually assist each other, to save our own souls and those that hear us, I judge it necessary to meet the Preachers, or at least the greater part of them, once a year.

"(5.) In those Conferences we fix the stations of all the Preachers for the ensuing year.

"But all this is not separating from the Church. So far from it, that, whenever I have opportunity, I attend the Church Service myself, and advise all our societies so to do.

"Nevertheless, as the generality even of religious people, who do not understand my motives of acting, and who on the one hand hear me profess that I will not separate from the Church, and on the other that I do vary from it in these instances, they will naturally think that I am inconsistent with myself. And they cannot but think so, unless they observe my two principles: *The one, that I dare not separate from the Church, that I believe it would be a sin so to do;* the other, that I believe it would be a sin not to vary from it in the points above mentioned. I say, put these two principles together, *First, I will not separate from the Church; yet Secondly,* in cases of necessity, I will vary from it (both of which I have constantly and openly avowed for upwards of fifty years), and inconsistency vanishes away. I have been true to my profession from 1730 to this day.

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"'But is it not contrary to your profession to permit Service in Dublin at Church hours? For what necessity is there for this? or what good end does it answer?' I believe it answers several good ends, which could not so well be answered any other way. The First is (strange as it may sound), to *prevent a separation* from the Church. Many of our society were totally separated from the Church; they never attended it at all. But now they duly attend the church every first Sunday in the month. 'But had they not better attend it every week?' Yes; but who can persuade them to it? I cannot. I have strove to do it twenty or thirty years, but in vain. The Second is, the weaning them from attending Dissenting Meetings, which many of them attended constantly, but have now wholly left. The Third is, the constantly hearing that sound doctrine which is able to save their souls.

"I wish all of you who are vulgarly termed Methodists would seriously consider what has been said. And particularly you whom God hath commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no means follow from hence, that ye are commissioned to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Ye never dreamed of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, 'seek the priesthood also.' Ye know 'no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' O contain yourselves within your own bounds; be content with preaching the Gospel; 'do

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the work of Evangelists;' proclaim to all the world the lovingkindness of God our Saviour; declare to all, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand: Repent ye and believe the Gospel!' I earnestly advise you, abide in your place; keep your own station. Ye were, fifty years ago, those of you that were then Methodist Preachers, *extraordinary messengers* of God, not going in your own will, but *thrust out*, not to supersede, but to 'provoke to jealousy,' the ordinary messengers. In God's name, stop there! Both by your preaching and example provoke them to love and good works. Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth,—a body of people who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties, and endeavour to forward all in heart-religion, in the knowledge and love of God and man. Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England; and though ye have and will have a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not; be Church-of-England men still; do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you, and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up."

After deprecating unjust criticism on the part of Churchmen unconnected with the society, and after again warning the rich of the special dangers which were around them, the discourse closed with the following appeal:—

"But whether ye will hear, or whether ye will forbear, we, by the grace of God, hold on our way; being ourselves still members of the Church of

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England, as we were from the beginning, but receiving all that love God in every Church, as our brother, and sister, and mother. And in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions, or in modes of worship, but barely that they 'fear God and work righteousness,' as was observed. Now this is utterly a new thing, unheard of in any other Christian community. In what Church or congregation beside, throughout the Christian world, can members be admitted upon these terms, without any other conditions? Point any such out, whoever can: I know none in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America! This is the glory of the Methodists, and of them alone! They are themselves no particular sect or party; but they receive those, of all parties, who 'endeavour to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.'"

The following is prefixed to a recent edition of this discourse, by the Rev. G. T. Stokes of Blackrock near Dublin :—

"The history of this sermon is very remarkable. It was preached in 1789, on his last visit to Ireland, when he was eighty-five years of age, and within two years of his death. The Dublin and Cork Societies were just then much troubled with proposals to leave the Church and become Dissenters. Wesley arrived in Dublin on the 29th of March in that year. On Easter Day—and here we quote from his Journals, vol. iv. p. 450—he met 'the Society, and explained to them at length the original design of the Methodists, viz., not to be a distinct party,

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but to stir up all parties, Christians or heathens, to worship God in spirit and in truth, but the Church of England in particular, to which they belonged from the beginning. With this view,' he continues, 'I have uniformly gone on for fifty years, never varying from the doctrine of the Church at all; nor from her discipline of choice; but of necessity; so in a course of a few years necessity was laid upon me, (1) To preach in the open air; (2) To pray extempore; (3) To form societies; (4) To accept of the assistance of Lay Preachers.' Next morning he set out on a tour through the south of Ireland; and within three weeks he preached the following sermon at Cork, 'to quench the fire which some had laboured to kindle amongst the poor quiet people about separating from the Church.'

"It is sometimes said, however, that this sermon was preached when Mr. Wesley was old and failing in mind. Let us appeal to the Larger Minutes, one of the standards of Methodism, drawn up in 1774 and revised from time to time. We quote from a copy dated the year in which he died, 1791. One question is, 'Who is the Assistant? *A.* That Preacher in each circuit who is appointed, from time to time, to take charge of the societies and the other Preachers therein. *Q.* How should an Assistant be qualified for his charge? *A.* By walking closely with God, and having His work greatly at heart; by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular; and by loving the Church of England and resolving not to separate from it. Let this be

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well observed. I fear when the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them.' (Works, vol. viii. p. 319.)

"On the next page we find the question, 'Are there any other advices you would give the Assistants? *A.* Exhort all that were brought up in the Church to continue therein. Set the example yourself; and immediately change every plan that would hinder them being at church at least two Sundays in four. Carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the Church, and let all the servants in our preaching-houses go to church once on Sunday at least. Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and sacrament. Warn them all against despising the prayers of the Church—against calling our preachers ministers, our houses meeting-houses; call them plain preaching-houses or chapels.' Finally (on page 299) he asks, 'What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the people called Methodists? *A.* Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land.'"

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APPENDIX XI.

THE WESLEY MANUSCRIPTS.

THESE were (as we have seen) looked through and "revised" from time to time by Wesley, so that he appears to have left none which were not liable to—if not intended for—publication, or which he was unwilling to place most unreservedly in the hands of his literary executors. Immediately after his death, they were all handed over to Dr. Whitehead, who published a selection from them in his Life of Wesley.

When Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore were engaged on a similar task, they had not the MSS. before them.

A very few years later—probably in the year 1795—the MSS. were deposited in the Minister's house adjoining City Road Chapel; and there they fell into the hands of Mr. Pawson, who has more than once been mentioned in the text. He was a zealous preacher, but a man of little culture or judgment. Some of Wesley's most valuable papers he seems to have given away to friends. Two of

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them, including that described on page 196, are thus endorsed—"Given to R. Reece in 1796, by Mr. Jno. Pawson," in the handwriting of the late Rev. Richard Reece, then the junior preacher at City Road, and afterwards President of the Conference in 1816 and 1835. He was one of the venerable men referred to on page 145.

At the same time, Mr. Pawson took on himself, without any shadow of authority, to throw away, literally as waste paper, a number of clearly written notes and memoranda in Wesley's own handwriting. Mr. Reece personally rescued many of these from destruction; and for fifty years or more he preserved them carefully. Some of them are now in the possession of the present writer, including the remarkable MS. described on page 67. Many others being cut into sections, and mounted on cards, found ready purchasers at a great bazaar held at the Wesleyan Centenary Hall and Mission House, in the year 1841.

Several of the sheets of paper which now remain, contain notes by Wesley, evidently made while he was engaged in the study of the records of the early Church. Notes on the Apostolical Canons occupy the first and second pages of the sheet described on page 66 ante. Of these notes the following will serve as an example:—

"No other Canons were ever termed Apostolic.

"John, Bishop of Constantinople, about the year 500, collected all the Canons then in force in the Eastern Church. The first of these he entitled—

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The 85 Canons which the Apostles publisht by Clemens. Justinian gives the same account of them; and ever since they have been in force in the Eastern Church.

"No ancient Canon is quoted by any Council in the former (?) age which is not in this collection.

"Nor yet can it be that all the laws of the Primitive Church are contained in this."

Three pages of an exactly similar sheet contain also notes on these Canons and on the "Apostolical Constitutions." The handwriting of the whole is clear and firm. The interesting memorandum on rites and observances (see p. 66) occupies the third page of the same sheet of paper. The fourth page is occupied by a list of names of persons—probably those visited in the course of pastoral duty. The surnames are added here, as they may lead possibly to the identification of the place:—Batty, Grub, Dyer, Clark, Setterton, Smith, Rowland, Benson, Hallifax, Glen, Snow, Ellis, Gardiner, Kitchin, Piguot, Snow, Brown, Jaques, Anderson, Coggan, Johnson, also three or four which are so contracted as not to be readable.

Some of the notes on the "Constitutions," contained on similar sheets of paper, are critical; for example:—

After the quotation, "On the fourth day Judas bargained to betray him," Wesley adds, "No, on the 6th. See John 13."

"Philemon, Bishop of Colosse," he adds, "Therefore S. Hilary knew not these Constitutions, for he calls Philemon a layman."

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To the following notes no criticism is added :—

"We are twelve—and the seven deacons."

"Let your servants rest on the Feast of the Nativity, the Epiphany, on the days of us Apostles, of Stephen, and of the other martyrs."

"Celebrate the third day of the Departed, the 9th and the 40th."

There follow five additional notes on the "Apostolical Canons" (which, it may be observed, are of earlier date and more assured authenticity than the "Constitutions"). These notes being brief, are here given entire :—

"CANONES APOST.

"*Canon* 27 [? 26]. Forbidding the clergy to marry —not extant before the Council of Nice.

"*Canon* 52. Commanding to receive penitents—not extant before the grand dispute about it.

"*Canon* 68. The Baptism [of] by hereticks null—not extant before S. Cyprian.

"*Canon* 69. Commanding to keep Lent and the Stations—not extant in Tertullian's time.

"*Canon* 85. Reciting Judith, Clement's epistles, etc., among the Canonical Scriptures—quite novel."

These interesting notes in Wesley's handwriting, although given to the public so long since as the year 1867, are ignored by Tyerman in his Life of Wesley—usually so full of detail.

To assign a date to these notes is only to hazard a guess. It is, in fact, open to any one to argue

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that the principal memorandum, that which begins with the words, "I believe myself" (see p. 66), was written so late as the month of January, 1746, immediately after Wesley had read King's essay on the Primitive Church.

On smaller scraps of paper lists of names appear; for example, one list of names is headed "Gutherton;" on the same leaf is a list of seventeen names, headed "Kington, February 17," and parallel with it a list of fifteen names headed "Stroud;" opposite to another list of names is written "Painswick." These may be set down to the time when the "classes" were re-arranged, about the year 1742.

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APPENDIX XII.

WESLEY'S JOURNALS.

THE voluminous Journals which Wesley had kept in shorthand for the greater part of his life, and from which he now and then published selections, passed under the terms of his will to Dr. Whitehead, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore, who were directed "to burn or publish." Wesley's own selections from his Journals, down to the year 1786, and a selection from the subsequent portion made by his executors, have been printed in successive editions by the Wesleyan Conference Office. They are in four volumes, and to the later issues only there is an index, with a preface by the late Dr. Jackson. It is to be regretted that Dr. Jackson (who was more competent for the task than any one now living) did not take the trouble to annotate the volumes and fill up the numerous blanks.

Mr. Moore survived his colleagues for more than a quarter of a century, and the Wesley MSS., excepting, of course, such as had been lost or given away, or destroyed by Mr. Pawson, remained in his

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hands. When people asked Mr. Moore if he was not bound either to publish them or to burn the MSS., his reply was that Wesley had fixed no time within which this should be done. There was a dispute more than once as to the custody of the papers; and, finally, when Mr. Moore died (about 1843) all the remaining Wesley MSS. passed to his own personal representative, Mr. W. Gandy, who resides near Norwich.

Application has been made more than once by the present writer for an inspection of the original Journals; but it is courteously refused. Mr. Gandy states that the Journals are contained in many volumes of shorthand. With them are a mass of letters, correspondence with Mrs. Delany and others; reports by Charles Wesley to his brother; inventories by Wesley of his own library, wardrobe, etc.; and his account books. Mr. Gandy expressing some anxiety as to the fate of all these papers, the present writer has advised him to deposit them all in the British Museum.

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APPENDIX XIII.

PORTRAITURE AND CHARACTER.

THE personal appearance of the Founder has frequently been described. Engravings and paintings without number have rendered familiar the low spare form arrayed in most exact clerical costume, the clear forehead, piercing eyes, aquiline nose, all marked by acuteness and firmness, without any trace of harshness, and all testifying to an undoubted, although remote, kinship with the great Duke of Wellington.

The portrait of Wesley most commonly met with, and that which formed the frontispiece of all the Wesleyan Hymn Books for some forty years, is, however, not a genuine work of art. It was composed by Jackson, R.A., as a *cento* from more genuine likenesses, and it is now going out of favour. Prefixed to the three volumes of Mr. Tyerman's biography are three Wesley portraits taken at different times of life, and all of interest. The latest, which represents Wesley in old age, is boldly ascribed to the eminent painter Romney. Wesley

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undoubtedly gave sittings to Romney, as he noted in his Journal; and this recently discovered portrait may be the work of Romney; but there is still some obscurity resting on a point for the full consideration of which this is not the place. The "Romney portrait" was first exhibited in the Kensington portrait collection of 1868, and it has been for several years the property of Rev. G. S. Rowe.

The present writer has had the advantage of hearing the personal appearance of Wesley described by more than one aged person who saw him in his later years. Such reminiscences fully confirm the accuracy of the description of his person given by the early biographers. The current description of Wesley was first sketched by Hampson, and the picture was filled in and adopted, first by Dr. Whitehead, and then by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore. All of these were intimately acquainted with Wesley, and their description of him may be relied on.

He is described as low in stature, of slight figure, but well proportioned. His frame was muscular, wiry, capable of great exertion, and he exhibited all the symptoms of a sound constitution. His features were clear cut, and fine; and his complexion was singularly fresh and healthy, even to the end of life. His countenance was expressive and benign; and it was a common thing for persons who were much prejudiced against him, to change their opinions on seeing him for the first time, and from that moment to become admiring friends.

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He was a pattern of neatness and simplicity in his dress and arrangements, and the clerical character was always scrupulously maintained. "In his study there was rarely a book misplaced, a paper unheeded, or a letter unanswered. He could enjoy the conveniences and amenities of life, and yet was ready at any hour to undertake a long journey."

The following account of Wesley as a preacher was given by Dr. Whitehead:—

"His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy. His action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive. His voice not loud, but clear and manly. His style neat, simple, and perspicuous, and admirably adapted to the capacity of his hearers. His discourses in point of composition were extremely different on different occasions. When he gave himself sufficient time for study, he succeeded; but when he did not, he frequently failed. . . . It was indeed manifest to his friends, for many years before he died, that his employments were too many, and he preached too often to appear with the same advantage at all times in the pulpit. His sermons were always short, seldom more than half an hour, and sometimes not so long. His subjects were judiciously chosen—instructive and interesting to the audience, and well adapted to gain attention and warm the heart."

"He had stated hours for every purpose, and his only relaxation was a change of employment. His rules were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, absolute and irrevocable. He had a peculiar plea-

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sure in reading and study. He had a high relish for polite conversation, especially with pious, learned, and sensible men; but whenever the hour came he was to set out on a journey, he instantly quitted any subject or any company, in which he might be engaged, without any apparent reluctance.

"For fifty-two years or upwards he generally delivered two, frequently three or four, sermons in a day. But calculating at two sermons a day, and allowing, as a writer of his life has done, fifty annually for extraordinary occasions, the whole number during this period will be 40,560. To these might be added an infinite number of exhortations to the society after preaching, and in other occasional meetings at which he assisted."

"In social life, Mr. Wesley was lively and conversable. . . . Having seen much of the world in his travels, and read more, his mind was well stored with an infinite number of anecdotes and observations; and the manner in which he related them was no inconsiderable addition to the entertainment they afforded. And in private life among his friends, his manner was equally sprightly and pleasant. It was impossible to be long in his company, either in public or private, without partaking of his placid cheerfulness, which was not abated by the infirmities of age or the approach of death, but was conspicuous at four score and seven as at one and twenty."

Dr. Whitehead then proceeds to comment on a passage in a letter by Archbishop Herring, which

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said that Wesley, "with parts and learning, was a dark and saturnine creature;" and he justly questioned the accuracy of the hasty sketch, contrasting with it the opinion of Dr. Johnson, who, with far better opportunities of judging, wrote of him thus: "Mr. Wesley's conversation is good. He talks well on any subject. I could converse with him all night." (Whitehead, ii., 479.)

Wesley's equanimity was thus spoken of by Dr. Whitehead:—

"Having an active, penetrating mind, his temper was naturally quick, and even tending to sharpness. The influence of religion and the constant habit of close thinking had in a great measure corrected this disposition. In general he preserved an air of sedateness and tranquillity. . . . Persecution, abuse, or injury he bore from strangers, not only without anger, but without any apparent emotion; and what he said of himself was strictly true—that he had a great facility in forgiving injuries. Submission on the part of the offender disarmed his resentment. . . . Though his confidence was often abused . . yet he suspected no one, nor was it easy to convince him that any one had intentionally deceived him."

The following is also from Dr. Whitehead:—

"His apprehension was clear, his penetration quick, and his judgment discriminative and sound. . . In governing a large body of preachers and people, of various habits, interests, and principles, with astonishing calmness and regularity, for many

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years, he showed a strong capacious mind. . . . As a scholar he certainly held a conspicuous rank. He was a critic in the Latin and Greek classics, and was well acquainted with the Hebrew, as well as with most of the European languages now in use. But Greek was his favourite language, in which his knowledge was extensive and accurate. At college he had studied, with a good deal of care, Euclid, Sir I. Newton's optics, etc., etc., but he never entered far into the more abstruse parts, or the higher branches of mathematics, finding that they would fascinate his mind and absorb all his attention, and divert him from the pursuit of the more important objects of his own profession. . . . He was a most determined opposer of those systems of natural philosophy which represent the powers of matter as the efficient causes of all the phenomena of nature. . . . Natural history was a field in which he walked at every opportunity, and contemplated, with infinite pleasure, the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God in the structure of natural bodies and in the various instincts and habits of the animal creation.

"His moderation in controversy deserves to be noticed. Writers of controversy too often forget that their own character is intimately connected with the manner in which they treat others; and if they have no regard for their opponents, they should have some for themselves. When a writer becomes personal and abusive, it affords a fair presumption against his arguments, and ought to put us on our guard against deception. Most of Mr.

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Wesley's opponents were of this description: their railing was much more violent than their reasons were cogent. Mr. Wesley kept his temper, and wrote like a Christian, a gentleman, and a scholar. He might have taken the words of the excellent Hooker, as a motto to his polemical tracts, 'To your railing I say nothing; to your reasons I say what follows.'"

Alexander Knox was a gentleman of good family and position in Ireland, who had a sincere admiration for Wesley, and saw him frequently. On the whole he has left the best description extant: and of this some passages must be given:—

"So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation we might be at a loss whether to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted ever the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellency of true religion. No

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cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse; no applause retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him, even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'may my latter end be like his!'"

Southey, while admitting the rare excellence of Wesley's character, made a more than doubtful use of ambiguous words when he described him as ambitious and enthusiastic. Alexander Knox, who was intimately acquainted with Wesley, made on these points some remarks of value:—

"The prevalent tempers and habits of Wesley's mind appear to have been inconsistent with ambitious feelings. . . . There never was a human being less accessible to care of whatever kind. . . . Sensible as he was both to pleasure and pain, and intensely as he desired the happiness of his disciples, still the impression made on him by adverse occurrences, though no doubt often sharp, was always transient. Be the exigence what it might, after adopting what appeared the best measures, he dismissed it from his thoughts. This happy faculty secured to him, through his long life, unbroken rest by night, and unclouded cheerfulness in the day; but it was a faculty which, I conceive, he could not have possessed had not his views been perfectly pure and disinterested. . . . Another charge against Mr. Wesley I cannot equally dispute, namely, that of enthusiasm. Still he was an enthusiast of no

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vulgar kind: as Nelson was an enthusiast for his country, so was John Wesley for religion. Where the highest interests of men were concerned, Wesley made no account of precedent, or public opinion, or maxims of human or even of ecclesiastical precedence. . . . Singular as was his course, he no more supposed himself raised above the guidance of his reason than of his conscience.

"It may perhaps be asked, whether the revolution which Mr. Wesley describes as having taken place in his mind at the Society in Aldersgate Street on the 24th of May, 1738, does not fix a charge of enthusiasm both on his mental character, and on all his subsequent plans of conduct? I should be obliged to answer that if that occurrence justified such a charge, several of the most eminent persons in the Christian world must equally be deemed enthusiasts: for example, St. Cyprian and St. Augustine in former times; and in times nearer to our own, George Herbert, Robert Boyle, and Bishop Ken. This last-mentioned ornament of our Church has told his own story, in a poem on the Divine Attribute of Truth. I could wish Mr. Southey to turn to it, and to judge whether it is not in substance the very counterpart of John Wesley's statement."

Shortly after Wesley's death a description of him was written by some very competent though unknown hand in *Woodfall's Diary* of June 17, 1791; and from this some passages may be quoted:—

"Had he loved wealth he might have accumu-

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lated it without bounds. Had he been fond of [worldly] power, his influence would have been worth courting by any party. I do not say he was without ambition: he had that which Christianity need not blush at, and which virtue is proud to confess. I do not mean that which is gratified by splendour and large possessions, but that which commands the hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude of thousands . . .

". . . His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardour of his spirit was neither damped by difficulty nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of Divine grace—by the world to enthusiasm. . . .

". . . To gain the admiration of an ignorant and superstitious age requires only a little artifice and address; to stand the test of these times, when all pretensions to sanctity are stigmatized as hypocrisy, is a proof of genuine piety and real usefulness. His great object was to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished spirit of the Church of England; and they who are its friends cannot be his enemies."

Perhaps the reader may think that the foregoing passages are little required to elucidate the character of a man whose life and labours form his most true eulogy and most enduring monument. Still the verdict of contemporary observers must always possess a lasting interest, and it is well that the impression made by Wesley on competent judges of character should be again placed on record.

It must be remembered that the descriptions of

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Wesley which have come down to us are written by those who knew him in his old age, when he had become a celebrity. He was then surrounded by much younger men, who were his disciples, his admirers, and, in the inoffensive sense of the word, his satellites. They were hardly in a position to converse freely and on equal terms with him, and they accepted, with much submission and readiness, all that the patriarch said or did. This accounts for the absence of any reports of conversations which might throw light on a few passages towards the end of the history which are somewhat inconsistent with the earlier passages. It also accounts for the statement, made on good authority, that few were really intimate with him in his advanced age. (*Annual Register*, 1792).

After the famous discourse on the Ministerial Office (see Appendix X.) which could not have been gratifying to the preachers, one of them who was most frequently with him, Henry Moore, ventured on a mild remonstrance. He "respectfully remarked" (as he tells us) that some who were styled evangelists acted as bishops, as though Timothy, when ordained a bishop, necessarily ceased to discharge the minor duty of an evangelist. Wesley merely smiled, and changed the subject, probably doubtful as to the utility of a discussion on so intricate a question with the young Irishman.

The late George Dawson of Birmingham, a diligent student of the lives and characters of many fore-

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most men in English annals, thus described Wesley in one of his lectures:—

"He was liberal, upright, noble, charitable, and wise; superstitious, fond of marvel-mongering, fond of education. He has never had justice done him as one of the educators of the people. He was afraid of ignorance, dreaded fanaticism, told his preachers to study, and made them do it. And this great man, who preached the wide world through almost, lived till his wide heart was apostolic; and, having literally preached under the trees of his youth, he died, his sect covering England, stretching to America, being found in almost every country of the civilized world. And probably this man called more people in England to wakefulness and watchfulness than any other man."

The last extract to be given is from the late Chancellor Massingberd (Lincoln), who wrote thus of Wesley's mission:—

"Whatever judgment may be formed of his character, it cannot be denied that he left the stamp of that character deeply engraven on his country and his times. The effect of the preaching of one of his missionary laymen is thus strikingly described by the poet Wordsworth:—

'Though clamorous as a hunter's horn
Re-echoed from a naked rock,
'Tis from that tabernacle. List!
Within a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock!

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'"Repent! repent!" he cried aloud,
"While yet ye may find mercy—strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to Him, seek Him day and night,
And save your souls alive!"'

"And the effect of these words on a reckless outcast, who heard them as he passed—

E'en as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly fall upon his ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear,
He melted into tears.'

"Oh, how we ought all to wish that some way might be yet opened by the good Providence of God for the re-uniting of these societies with the Church that Wesley loved!"

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APPENDIX XIV.

STATISTICS.

In Great Britain the number of accredited members of the Wesleyan Methodist body (original connexion) was as follows:—

In 1870	...	...	...	367,306
„ 1878	...	...	...	380,876
„ 1879	...	...	...	377,612

In round numbers there are fifteen hundred ministers wholly devoted to their work, and twelve thousand "local" preachers.

In Ireland there has also been a slight decrease of late years. There are five other distinct Methodist bodies in Great Britain, viz., Primitive Methodists, New Connexion, United Free Church Methodists, Bible Christians, and Wesleyan Reformers; of which that first mentioned is larger than the rest combined. These five bodies numbered—

In 1870	...	...	...	290,491
„ 1878	...	...	...	326,847

Turning to America the figures are much larger,

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as the Methodist body there claims to have more than two millions of enrolled members. There are also large societies in most of the British Colonies, and small ones in many European and other foreign States. The total is estimated at four millions and a half.

It is impossible to estimate with anything like accuracy the number of friends and adherents, or those who, with more or less frequency, attend services in Methodist Chapels, without being enrolled as members. Large numbers of them belong to other churches and sects. The total number of persons, old and young, throughout the world, claimed as belonging in some sense to Methodism, was estimated by the Rev. L. H. Wiseman at "eleven millions and upwards."

The foregoing details are taken from Dr. Rigg, supplemented by "The conversation in the Wesleyan Conference at Birmingham," 1879.

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INDEX.

Aberdeen visited, 177
All Saints' Day observed, 64
America, voyage to, 28
American Methodism, 163
Apostolical Canons, notes on, 330
Apostolical succession, 72, 304
Arbroath visited, 177, 178
Arcadia, Bishop of, 133
Arminian Magazine, 200
Asbury, Francis, 166, 168

Baddiley, Rev. William, 129
Baptism, sermons on, 298
Bateman, Rev. R. T., 100
Bennet, John, 110
Benson, Rev. J., 249
Berridge, Rev. J., 126
Bertholdsdorf visited, 46
Biographies described, 257
Bohler, Peter, influence of, 37; later history of, 53
Book-room, profits of, 189
Bosanquet, Miss, 126
Brevint, editions of, 60; his book described, 283
Bristol visited, 51, 76
Brooke, Henry, mentioned, 195
Buckle, H. T., misstatements of, 273
Burial of Charles Wesley, 117; of John Wesley, 230
Burton, Dr., of Oxford, 27

Calvin mentioned, 22
Calvinism, disputes on, 119, 125
Causton, Mr., 31
Charity sermons preached, 214
Charterhouse School, 5, 6
Christian Library, the, 195
Church and State, 62
Church of Rome, 63
Church societies, 275
Circuits of preachers, 140
City Road Chapel, built, 208; partly destroyed, 209
Clarke, Dr. Adam, 174, 226
Classes visited, 88
Class-meetings, origin of, 275
Clulow, Wesley's solicitor, 244
Coke, Rev. Dr., meeting with, 135; later history of, 136
Communion, weekly, 210
Conference, first, 97; constitution of, 246
Cork visited, 149, 160
Coughlan, Rev. L., 134, 164
Creighton, Rev. J., 134
Curacy held by Wesley, 14
Cyprian, St., followed, 64, 83

Dawson, G., quotation from, 345
Declaration of trustees, 1793, 242
Deed-poll of 1784, 246
Delany (Pendarves), Mrs., 17, 333
Delamotte, Mr. C., 32, 55

Digitized by Google

Derry, Bishop of, 131, 150
Dickenson, Rev. P., 122, 134
Dodd, Dr., mentioned, 214
Dublin visited, 148, 160

Editorial labours, 200
Embury, Philip, 163
Episcopacy, views on, 69, 316
Epworth, disturbances at, 3; revisited, 95, 220
Erasmus, Bishop, from Crete, 133
Eucharist, doctrine of, 18
Eucharistical volume, 60; contents of, 283

Fellowship at Oxford, 11; resigned, 24
Fletcher, Rev. J. W., 123; death of, 126
Foundry at Moorfields, 85; abandoned, 207

Gandy, Mr. William, 333
Garrick, anecdote of, 222
Georgia, voyage to, 28; return from, 33
Germany visited, 44
Gibson, Bishop of London, 49, 80
Glasgow visited, 175, 178
Gordon, Lord G., visited, 214
Greek bishop, a, 133
Greenock visited, 177
Grimshaw, Rev. W., 123, 237
Gwynne, Mr., 110

Hall, Mr. Westley, 69
Hamilton, Dr., 145
Hampson, sen. and jun., 143; Life by, 257
Haworth, Yorkshire, 123, 237
Herrnhut visited, 46
Hervey, Rev. J., 194, 279
Hey, Mr., of Leeds, 237
Hicks, Rev. Mr., 126
Hill, Rowland, 218
Hoskins' Essay, 279
Holden's Essay, 266
Holland, trips to, 217
Homilies studied, 22, 56
Hopkey, Miss, 31
Howard, interview with, 158
Huntingdon, S. Countess of, 106
Hymns of the Wesleys, 110, 191

Ignatius, St., 195, 305
Ingham, Rev. B., travels with, 28, 45
Ireland, first visit to, 147; last visit to, 160; Primitives in, 162
Isle of Man, 216

Jackson's edition of *Journals*, 332
Johnson, Dr., letter of, 196
Jones, John, 132
Journals of Wesley, 332
Justification, views of, 74, 278

Keble, resemblance to, 63
Kempis, à, republished, 190
King, Peter, 70; account of *his* book, 303
Kingswood School, 142
Knox, Alexander, 340
"Korah, Dathan, and Abiram," 322

Larger Minutes quoted, 236, 325
Lavington, Bishop, 93
Law, William, influence of, 18; writings of, 38, 199
Lay preachers. *See* Preachers
Leeds visited, 160, 216
Lincoln College, Oxon, 14, 21
Locals. *See* Preachers
Love-feasts, 64
Lowth, Bishop, 214

Macclesfield, visit to, 179

Digitized by Google

Madeley visited, 124
Manuscripts of Wesley, 327
Marriage, views of, 24; of Wesley, 212
Massingberd's Essay, 276
Maxfield, Thomas, 130, 318; secession of, 132
McNab, a preacher, 232
Medd, Mr., on union, 271
Meriton, Mr., 121
Miracles, modern, 153
Molther, a Moravian, 52
Moore, Henry, 218, 261
Monument at Westminster, 230
Moorfields, preaching in, 81; the Foundry, 85
Moravians, the, 35; separation from, 53
Murray, Mrs. Grace, 110

Newcastle-on-Tyne, 95, 222
New Chapel built, 208; burnt, 209
Norwich mentioned, 222
Notes on New Testament, 194

Oglethorpe, General, 27
O'Leary, Father, 201
Olivers, Thomas, 200
Open-air preaching, 76
Orders, Presbyterian, 173
Ordination, for America, 167; question, 180, 248; made general 1836, 251
Osborn's edition of the poems, 110
Oxford, religious society at, 15; revisited (1741), 22; (1784), 25

Patrick's, St., Dublin, 152, 160
Pawson, Mr. John, 187, 327
Perfection, doctrine of, 90
Perronet, Rev. V., 121
Perronet, Mr., jun., 122, 316
Persecutions in 1743, 102
Perth visited, 178
Piers, Rev. H., 121
Popery, accusation of, 92
Portraits of Wesley, 334
Potter, Archbishop, 11
Prayers for the faithful dead, 66
Preachers, first lay, 138; second race of, 144; local, 142, 145; last survivors of, 145; ordinations by, 251; sermons to, 317
Presbyterian orders, 173, 251
Primitive Church, 64
Primitive Methodists, 162, 347
Psalms of David revised, 203
Pusey, Dr., anticipated, 65

Rankin, Mr. Thomas, 164
Reece, Rev. R., 251, 328
Reformers in Scotland, 178
Rich, warnings to the, 226
Richardson, Rev. J., 230
Rigg, Dr. J. H., essay by, 268
Rioting in Staffordshire, 103
Ritualistic notes, 66
Romney's portrait, 334

St. Cyprian imitated, 64
St. Patrick's, Dublin, 152, 160
Sacramentarian Club, Oxford, 15
Sacraments, views on, 60; treatises on, 283, 298
Saints' days and festivals, 62, 64
"Schism," Wesley on, 310
School discipline, 7
Sclater mentioned, 304
Scotland, ordinations for, 182
Scottish Kirk remarked on, 175, 178
Secession deprecated, 232, 236, 313
Secker, Archbishop, 100
Sermons of Wesley, 190, 336; on baptism, etc., 298
Shoreham (Kent), 99, 121
Simeon, Rev. C., 219
Smyth, Rev. Edward, 134

Digitized by Google

Societies, religious, 275
Society, the, at Oxford, 15
Southey, Robert, Life by, 252, 259
S.P.C.K. mentioned, 83
S P.G., mission by, 27
Stations, or partial fasts, 67
Statistics of Methodism, 347
Stillingfleet's Irenicon, 68, 308

Tauler, Dr. John, 44
Tertullian quoted, 304
Toplady, Rev. A. M., 197
Trelawney, Sir H., letter to, 310
Trustees' declaration in 1793, 242
Trusts of chapels, 244
Tyerman, biography by, 264; omissions in, 36, 128, 230, 330

Union with the Church, 247
University, sermons before, 22; fellowship resigned, 24

Venn, Rev. Henry, 127
Verbal inspiration, 63
"Vigil" or Watch-night, 89

Walsh, Thomas, 234
Watson, Rev. R., 250, 262
Webb, Captain, 164
Wedgwood, Miss, Life by, 264; quotation from, 279
Wesley, Mrs. Mary, 212
Wesley, Mrs. Susanna, 2; her death, 96
Wesley, Rev. Charles, account of, 108; his hymns, 110; his death, 116
Wesley, Rev. John, early days of, 6; at Oxford, 9, 22, 25; in Georgia, 30; marriage of, 212; moves to City Road, 213; death of, 229; his will, 258; Journals of, 332; appearance and character of, 334
Wesley, Rev. Samuel, 7
Wesley, Samuel, jun., 4
Westminster, monument at, 230
Westminster School, 108
Whitefield, at Oxford, 15; Wesley's separation from, 87; his death, 120
Whitehead, Dr., 230; book by, 258
Wilberforce, William, 219, 229
Will of Wesley, 258
Wolley and Wolff, Messrs., 244
Wroote, near Epworth, 14

Zinzendorf, Count, 53

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